

CELEBRITY INFLUENCE

POLITICS, PERSUASION, AND ISSUE-BASED ADVOCACY

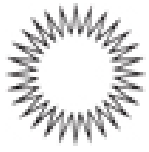
MARK HARVEY

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Mark Harvey



University Press of Kansas

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The origins of this book began in the classroom. I long have had a passion for music, popular culture, and politics, and I encouraged my students to make connections among them. We had amazing discussions about organizing, citizen engagement, and the media, which led to historical and contemporary questions about musicians and celebrities. Had George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh actually raised consciousness about starvation and oppression in Southeast Asia? Had John Lennon's organizing with Jerry Rubin and Abby Hoffman amounted to any real changes? Does it make a difference when politicians play music at their rallies? How did Ronald Reagan co-opt Bruce Springsteen's critical and subversive "Born in the USA" as a campaign theme? Why was President George Bush publicly consulting with Bono from U2 about issues in the developing world? As my students became more emotionally and academically engaged with the subject matter, I began to explore what it was about musicians and celebrities that entangled them with politics. Like so many colleagues, I was interested but skeptical about the power and influence generated by famous people in popular culture. However, my skepticism got the best of me, and I began to think of ways that I could test a thesis: that celebrity activists could effectively influence the political process.

At the time I began the process of writing this book, there was practically no literature in political science on the topic of celebrities in politics. West and Orman's *Celebrity Politics* (2003) was in print, John Street (1997, 2002) had done some seminal research on the subject, and there were a handful of articles. However, convincing peers and publishers that this topic was worth pursuing was the most challenging part of this project. When I argue in this book that there has been strong skepticism in the political science community about the notion that celebrities make any difference in politics, I am not referring to the literature. I am literally talking about political scientists telling me that I was wasting my time—that no one takes celebrities seriously, and at best they are generally good for photo ops with

politicians. In the words of George Harrison's "Awaiting on You All," I was "awaiting" the academic community to "awaken and see" the potential in this research area. Of course, the very fact that this attitude was so entrenched in the community made this study a sort of crucial case. If everyone expected that celebrities didn't matter much in politics, it would indeed be significant if I proved otherwise.

Eventually, others published works on this subject, and I found a friendly publisher at the University Press of Kansas, willing to support me on this project. As we pushed this project toward completion in 2016, something odd happened: Donald Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee for president of the United States. Here we had the unlikely case of a celebrity with no prior experience in public office running for the most powerful political position in the world. Granted, the purpose of this book was not to focus on the effectiveness of celebrities running for office. The focus of this book is on the influence of celebrity activists on the political process. However, Trump was a celebrity activist of sorts—convincing millions only a few years earlier that Barack Obama was not born in the United States and turning "birtherism" into a public issue that the president could not ignore. How could we publish this book without reference to Trump?

With an eye on the 2016 election, I did additional research. I studied Trump, and gathered additional data on people's perceptions of him as a spokesperson, activist, celebrity, and politician. While this book is not exclusively about Donald Trump, I believe that the conclusions that I have derived from the data do offer some insights on Trump's successful bid for the presidency. Now the notion that a celebrity might influence the political system somehow seems less far-fetched.

Any project like this cannot be achieved without a community of support, and despite the challenges of completing this work, many supported me. The few words or the mention of a name below do not adequately express my deep appreciation for those who brought me to this point.

First, I would like to thank those at the University Press of Kansas for having confidence in this project, including Chuck Myers, Joyce Harrison, Larisa Martin, Michael Kehoe, the editorial board, and good people such as

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I would also like to recognize those who inspired me to rethink my skepticism about the role of celebrities and musicians in politics. Long before this became a research project, an idea to write a book about music and politics was hatched with Jill Steans in a bar in Brussels. Debates in pubs in Birmingham and Munich with Oliver Hofmann about Bob Dylan, John Lennon, and Bono greatly softened my attitude and opened my mind to the possibility that they might be more conscientious and influential than I first expected.

Many outstanding individuals not only provided key opportunities but also specifically helped to facilitate the execution of the survey. By execution, I mean that people assisted in the editing of the survey, arranged for participants on my behalf, made copies and collated different versions of surveys, assisted me with revisions, guided me through processes of institutional review, and so much more. As a personal favor to me, these people undertook many menial tasks and took their valuable time to ensure that the study would be successful. These people include Larissa Brown, Carolyn Doolittle, Karenbeth Zacharias, Jim Cox, Nicole Hess-Escalante, Jessica Vega-Anaya, Phil Watlington, Jim Zimmerman, David Strohm,

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I would also like to thank more students than I can possibly mention here. You have all been inspirational. I cannot possibly, in this space, share the ways in which you have made my life richer. You are in my mind and heart. At times I have been the student and other times the instructor, but I always seem to learn more than I teach.

Since this book takes a serious nod to music and the arts, I must also acknowledge my eternal bandmates: Jonathan Leahey, Jeremy Baguyos, Jeff Matchette, Matt Lenahan, Aaron Green, Mark Hall, Jason McDonnell, Mike Harvey, Andrea O'Keefe, and John Caniglia. I especially remember Phillip Moore, who passed away while I was completing this book.

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Finally, I thank God . . . from whom all blessings flow.

1. The President Meets the Rock Star

“George Bush is a comedian. . . . I walk down the corridor, he comes out and stands to attention. ‘Here’s the President. . . . What do you want us to do this time, Bono?’”

This is Bono, lead singer of the rock group U2, talking about a private exchange with President George W. Bush at the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland. According to Bono, the president humorously stood at attention, as if he were at the beck and call of the rock star.

At the G8 summit, Bono had a free access “backstage pass,” which allowed him to lobby President Bush and other world leaders to sign a communiqué pledging $50 billion of debt relief to some of the poorest countries in the world. “Now this is a guy who knows where I stand on the [Iraq] war,” Bono continues, “a long, long way from where he stands—who knows there are so many things we could never see eye to eye on, and yet the leader of the free world lets us into the room and we’re there for an hour, shaking the tree at the last minute, pushing malaria and pushing girls’ education, making sure it ends up in the communiqué” (McCormick et al. 2006, 342).

What is a rock star doing at a gathering of the world’s most powerful political leaders, and why should anyone listen to him? Bono is not an elected official. The indebted countries he claims to represent are not paying him and did not choose him to be their spokesman. Bono and his organization did not donate cash to Bush’s reelection campaign. Bono’s main U.S. constituency, so to speak, consists of consumers of U2 records and concerts. Yet Bono gained rare access to some of the most powerful leaders in the world and persuaded them to sign a landmark document pledging a substantial sum. Bono’s story presents a modern puzzle: Why would the president of the United States give a rock star an hour of his time to lobby him directly on international debt relief? What does a celebrity have to offer a president?

Prior to 2016, this was a genuinely surprising question. Then, in a twist that seemed to emerge from the fictional political satire of films like Tim Robbins's *Bob Roberts* or Warren Beatty's *Bullworth*, a celebrity became president.[1] Trump won. Donald J. Trump, a high-profile real estate developer and reality show star, was elected to the most powerful political position in the world. Trump did not win the Republican nomination or the presidency based on his resumé. He had no prior experience in military or public office. Indeed, more than any governor that ever ran an anti-Washington, anti-establishment campaign, Trump ran as the ultimate outsider. The fact that he was a celebrity instead of a politician became an asset rather than a liability. His only relevant experience was as a businessman, which he had promoted for years through tabloids and television. He brandished this experience as a qualification to improve the operations of government.

These facts make Trump rare but not unique. Outsiders with no political experience occasionally come onto the American scene to capitalize on voters' disgust with the establishment. This populist approach has a certain mass appeal. Ross Perot, running in 1992 and less successfully in 1996, took a similar approach, promising to run the government like a business. What makes Trump unusual, according to Bill Schneider of Reuters (2015), is that he "combines two political traditions: the political outsider and the fringe candidate." In addition to populist pronouncements, Trump also appeals to an extreme ideological core of Republicans centered in the Tea Party, who are very committed and motivated.

These factors alone do not necessarily prove his success, however. Many have argued that his bold campaign style may have made an important difference. Trump's campaign events were like rock concerts. He was short on policy details and high on drama. People were as attracted to his insults as they were to his proposals. Indeed, he could utter the most offensive and outlandish statements, making outrageous promises and claims, and his popularity with his base would eventually rebound. Pundits expected disparaging statements about immigrants and a Mexican judge, a public altercation with the Muslim parents of an American soldier, disparaging comments about women and minorities, and revelations of a conversation in which he bragged about hypothetical sexual assault to derail his campaign. However, as Trump himself said at a rally in Iowa, "I could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose voters"

(Diamond 2016). What people expected from a campaign and a successful presidential candidate was ultimately turned on its head.

While it is correct that Trump has never held public office before, he has still been involved in politics, and his presidential run was years in the making. In 1987, at the encouragement of longtime Republican operative Roger Stone, Trump openly criticized Ronald Reagan's foreign policy and hinted that he might run for president, ultimately landing in New Hampshire with an announcement that he would not do so (Kranish and Fisher 2016, 276). By the mid-1990s, his financial problems prevented his involvement in many political activities other than his routine support of political candidates as an ongoing cost of doing business. In 1999 he suggested that he might run for president for the Reform Party, naming Oprah Winfrey as a possible vice presidential choice. In 2000 he sought advice from Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura, but decided that he would not run and could not win as a third party candidate. Nevertheless, he won Reform Party primaries in Michigan and California (Kranish and Fisher 2016, 285–87).

Trump changed party identification seven times between 1999 and 2011 before contemplating a presidential run again. Trump's resurgent celebrity, built upon his success as the star of the reality television show *The Apprentice,* made him a front-runner, tied for second behind former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, and polling first among self-identified Tea Party voters. It was then that Trump began a grassroots campaign challenging President Barack Obama's citizenship, alleging that he was born in Kenya rather than in the United States. While the political or media establishment never took these allegations too seriously, it was an interesting enough sideshow to make news. Trump would regularly tweet and show up on news shows to cast doubt on Obama's citizenship and to demand "transparency." Eventually Obama produced his long form birth certificate, announced that he had no time for this "silliness," and then famously roasted Trump at the 2011 White House Correspondents' Dinner. Two weeks later, Trump announced that he would not run for president and eventually endorsed Mitt Romney for president. Twelve days after Romney's defeat, he patented the slogan "Make America Great Again" (Barbaro 2016; Kranish and Fisher 2016, 291–92; Parker and Eder 2016).

Despite Trump's long-term ambition to be president, in some ways he has more in common with Bono than he does with Bush or Obama. Like Bono,

he is a celebrity with no experience as a public official. Like Bono, he educated himself in political organizing through networking with political elites. Like Bono, he was really a political activist rather than a politician.

Indeed, outside of his successful presidential run—which one could argue more closely resembled a public advocacy campaign than a political campaign—his most successful political exercise was championing the birther movement. One could argue that it ended ignominiously, with Trump dropping his presidential aspirations after facing the ridicule of the White House Correspondents' Dinner. However, he was extremely effective as a celebrity activist. He forced Obama to release his birth certificate. He likely had an effect on public opinion. In February 2011, one month before Trump weighed in on the birther issue, a CNN poll revealed that only 25 percent of Americans had doubts about Obama's citizenship, and a PPP poll revealed that 51 percent of Republicans believed that Obama was not born in the United States. In March Trump first expressed his birther conspiracy beliefs on the daytime television show *The View.* Just before Obama released his birth certificate in April, a Gallup poll revealed that only 38 percent of all Americans were convinced that Obama was "definitely" born in the United States. After his birth certificate was released, that number improved to 47 percent. However, even as late as August 2016, an NBC poll revealed that 72 percent of Republicans believed that Obama was not born in the United States, and these results were consistent among both "high and low political knowledge Republicans" (Barbaro 2016; A. Barr 2011; Cheney 2016; Clinton and Roush 2016; Condon 2011; Parker and Eder 2016).

How much of Trump's electoral success had to do with his celebrity status? During interviews conducted for research on this book, respondents were asked, "Is there something about Trump's celebrity status that gave him an edge in the campaign? If so, what was it?" The following answers seem to reinforce much of the prior analysis:

> "People had enough of the typical politician. Trump is different and talks like the average Joe."
>
> "He appealed to the individuals tired of politicians. His lack of filter seemed to make people feel he was real and more trustworthy than a politician. In addition, his appearance as a successful businessman elevated his status."

> "I believe uneducated Americans saw a familiar face they'd seen on television and decided to vote for him like it was *American Idol.*"

Perhaps too much should not be made of Trump's success. After all, a majority of Americans voted for former secretary of state Hillary Clinton and her more conventional political campaign. According to some analyses, the number of votes in key districts that made a difference in Trump's Electoral College victory could fill a small stadium (Meko, Lu, and Gamio 2016). Still, the very fact that a celebrity could mount a campaign to topple one of America's most experienced political insiders is striking. Is there something that can be learned from stories like Trump's? Are there dozens of potential "Donald Trumps"? Are there celebrities with enough fame, power, and skills to influence the political system? If so, how does this influence work?

SPEAKING OUT: LISTEN TO BATMAN

For every action, there must be a reaction. The ascendancy of celebrity Trump to the Republican nomination and ultimately the presidency has provoked an intense politicized reaction from his fellow celebrities. To name a few, producer Lee Daniels and many in the cast of his television show, *Empire*, criticized Trump for "violence and nasty rhetoric against mankind." *West Wing* actor Richard Schiff charged, "We've never experienced anyone so blatantly willing to care so little about what happens to the world." Actor Lena Dunham, speaking at the Democratic National Convention, said that Trump's "rhetoric about women takes us back to a time when we were meant to be beautiful and silent." America Ferrera, in another DNC speech, argued that "Donald's not making America great again. He's making America hate again." Actor Susan Sarandon attacked Trump for making "hatred and racism normal" in America. Accepting her Golden Globe award in January 2017, actor Meryl Streep criticized Trump for mocking a disabled reporter in 2016: "This instinct to humiliate, when it's modeled by someone in the public platform, by someone powerful, it filters down into everybody's life, because it kind of gives permission for other people to do the same thing. Disrespect invites disrespect. Violence incites violence" (N. Brown 2017).

The Women's March on Washington on January 21—the largest protest in American history—featured high-profile celebrities such as Janelle Monáe, Scarlett Johansson, Michael Moore, and Madonna speaking and performing on behalf of a multitude of liberal causes. Other celebrities took to the street and led chants, such as Katy Perry, Julia Roberts, Amy Poehler, Emma Watson, and Felicity Huffman. Countless other celebrities appeared at marches throughout the world that day, including Ian McKellen, Gillian Anderson, and Lin-Manuel Miranda in London (Garfield 2017; Izadi 2017). This celebrity activism was followed by political statements at the Golden Globes, Grammys, Film Independent Spirit Awards, and Oscar ceremonies from stars such as Jimmy Fallon, Hugh Laurie, Viola Davis, James Corden, Beyoncé, Katy Perry, Patton Oswalt, Casey Affleck, Jodi Foster, and Molly Shannon (E. Berman 2017; Del Barco 2017; Greenburg 2017; Konerman 2017). Singer and actor Jennifer Lopez summed up the general mood at the Grammy Awards: "At this particular time in history, our voices are needed more than ever" (Greenburg 2017).

"God help us," sighed actor Robert De Niro (N. Brown 2017).

Even action star, former celebrity turned politician, and fellow Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger came out against Trump. Schwarzenegger succeeded Trump as the host of *The Apprentice*. In tweets and during a live presidential press conference, President Trump criticized Schwarzenegger for low ratings, calling the show a "total disaster." Schwarzenegger's first instinct was to "request a meeting and go back to New York. And then . . . just smash his face into the table." Upon further reflection, he thought it better to "be above all of that and put him on the spot," challenging Trump to "work for all of the American people as aggressively as you worked for your ratings" (Arnold Schwarzenegger on Trump 2017).

It is easy to argue that when celebrities speak, people listen. However, whether people pay much attention or care about political statements such as these is quite another question. A survey by CNN/USA Today said that only 3 percent of Americans believed that celebrities can be effective in influencing the political process or causes. Most (64 percent) believed that they were "not too effective or effective at all," and 87 percent rejected the idea that celebrities influenced their personal positions on political issues (Gunter 2014, 145).

U.S. Olympic runner Nick Symmonds shares these sentiments. He argues that he and other athletes lack the credentials or ability to influence people, but that they have freedom of speech, just like any other citizen. In an interview expressing support for gun control and opposition to discrimination against homosexuals, he expresses his belief that he is obliged to speak his mind, even if it comes to nothing and even if his point of view provokes controversy:

> Too often, athletes go into a press conference and are asked difficult questions and they say, "No comment," and I never wanted to be that kind of athlete. I have opinions on everything and I have logical reasons why I have come to those conclusions and I'll tell you why I feel that way. . . . They said, you know, you're an athlete. What makes you qualified to speak out about anything? Or some people have gone as far as to say I'm a disgrace to America and I shouldn't be allowed to represent the country because I can't keep my mouth shut. And I just laugh at these people. . . . First Amendment is the right to free speech. And as an American, I'm going to exercise that right domestically and internationally, barring getting arrested in Russia for speaking out against their laws, where my First Amendment doesn't necessarily apply (Ashlock 2013).

The public's awkward, if not cynical, relationship with outspoken celebrities is nothing new. Singer Frank Sinatra supported Roosevelt for president in 1944, stating, "Some people tell me I may hurt my career by taking sides in a political campaign. And I say to them, 'To hell with this career. Government is more important'" (Suebsaeng 2015).

Despite Symmonds's self-professed humility about his personal views, few would care about his opinion if he were not an Olympic athlete. Likewise, Symmonds did not write an op-ed in *Runner's World* or publicly dedicate "his silver medal to his gay and lesbian friends," enduring criticism from cynics, if he did not hope or expect to change some minds (Symmonds 2013).

In contrast, actor Ben Affleck acknowledges society's cynicism about celebrities and their causes, but he also claims to be far different from the typical American citizen. His aspirations are explicit. Appearing in a joint

interview with Senator Russ Feingold on NPR's *Morning Edition* with David Greene, Affleck claims:

> I'm not an expert. I'm a person who's spent a lot of energy and dedicated a lot of my time to this issue. . . . What I am is an advocate, and a human being, and a director, and an actor, and somebody who cares deeply about this, and wants other people to know about it. . . . We live in a society that gives a very, very high profile to even the most mundane activities of entertainers, and so I'd like to take some of that interest and focus it on something substantial (Greene 2014).

Affleck is right. Celebrities are not just typical American citizens. Few media consumers are interested in the real "mundane activities" of regular people.[2] They want to hear from the next Batman. This may not be logical or rational. Indeed, it makes little sense to consult the next Batman on matters of public policy. Yet people do. And Affleck believes that he has something intelligent to share. Thus when Ben Affleck takes the microphone in an NPR studio, he believes that people will want to listen to Batman's account of the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. By appearing on a radio program, he hopes that Batman will be more likely than most experts to raise awareness and move people toward action on this issue.

Feingold and Greene seemed tacitly to concur. In the interview, 68 of the spoken words were Feingold's, while 963 were Affleck's. The interview was almost entirely directed toward Affleck, and Feingold did not attempt to intervene in the conversation. From this single example, one could infer that reporters and politicians alike may believe that people just wanted to listen to Batman—or that a celebrity is better at getting attention and making a case than a politician is.

I'M JUST A SINGER IN A ROCK AND ROLL BAND: GOOD INTENTIONS VERSUS REALITY

As mentioned before, there may be more in common between Trump and Bono than between Trump and Bush or Obama. However, Trump's foray into celebrity activism was different from most of the celebrity activists

profiled in this book. One could argue that Trump's run for public office may have been an opportunity to serve his country and to "make America great again." However, Trump sought political power. To the extent that he was able to exert celebrity influence, it was on behalf of his own electoral aspirations, not for a particular cause. Unlike Trump, the other celebrities profiled in this book have advocated on behalf of groups and political issues without seeking political office. Thus the motives are different. Trump wanted to gain political power to advance an agenda. The others intend to influence those in political power in order to advance an agenda.

This distinction is crucial. Trump did not have to "land lunches" with politicians to run for office. He could have done so. If, in 2015, he had convinced the establishment that he was a viable candidate and sought party support, some in the party would certainly have taken him seriously, and his presidential bid might have started more smoothly. Republicans have an interest in running a winning candidate. However, Trump did not want or need the attention of politicians. Part of the appeal of his campaign was to run against Washington in general and against the Republican Party establishment in particular. With his wealth and independence, he claimed to raise his own money and build his own organization, free from influence of the establishment. In Trump's own words, "It would be nice if the Republicans stuck together. I can win one way or the other. I obviously won the primaries without them. I'm an outsider and I won the primaries" (Bronston 2016).

Bono, on the other hand, is "just a singer in a rock and roll band." He has no aspirations for higher office. During early concert performances with U2, he was prone to polemic political statements that were sometimes directed at politicians. Since Trump's candidacy, he returned to this style of criticism in concert, attacking Trump for his policies on immigration and accusing him of "running off with the American dream" (Brucculieri 2016). However, most of Bono's political advocacy has involved working with transnational advocacy groups in which he has played the role of spokesman and lobbyist. In that role, he has little interest in burning bridges with politicians. Good intentions alone will not garner the attention of public officials. Thus, his game is quite different. He wants to land lunches with American presidents and politicians, even if they are diametrically opposed to him on most policies. Celebrities like Bono need to convince politicians that it is worth their time to ally with a celebrity. One could

easily envision him attempting to reconcile with Trump in order to gain common ground on international issues, just as he did with George W. Bush, which reportedly began as a contentious relationship and ended as a friendship.

In this spirit, it is worth remembering that not every celebrity came out against Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign or early in his presidency. An adversarial approach—characterized by those who made political statements at awards shows—may not always be the most effective way to influence the political process. At the very least, it is only one part of an overall influence strategy. Some celebrities, like Bono during the Bush administration, utilize more of an insider strategy. Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, an ardent environmental activist, met with Trump to discuss climate change shortly after his announcement that climate science skeptic Scott Pruitt would be appointed to head the Environmental Protection Agency. Former NFL players Jim Brown and Ray Lewis lobbied Trump to support "Amer-I-Can," their organization with the mission of teaching life skills to the poor. Rapper Kanye West spoke with Trump "to discuss multicultural issues" including bullying, education , and violence (Flores 2017; Holland 2016; Liu 2016). Despite Trump's strong independent streak, he is still scheduling meetings with celebrities. Why?

In Trump's case, part of the motivation may be to slight his adversaries. Trump's celebrity meetings took place in a context where Jesse Jackson and other civil rights leaders were attempting to meet with the president to discuss urban policies and violence. As of his press conference on February 16, 2017, Trump still had not met with members of the Congressional Black Caucus. It is possible that Trump could be pursuing an outside strategy, just as he did during the campaign: communicating a sensitivity toward issues that concern minorities on his own terms, while making it clear that he does not need or perhaps want the attention of those who have been critical of him, such as civil rights icon and Georgia representative John Lewis (Alcindor 2017; Flores 2017). Instead of relying on civil rights leaders of the establishment, perhaps Trump hopes to legitimate his own leaders.

However, Trump is exceptional. He won the election by inventing his own playbook, so to speak. He has had more experience as a celebrity than as a politician. So an answer to the question "Why would Trump consult with a celebrity?" is likely quite different from the more general question,

“Why would any other politician consult with a celebrity?” In answering the more general question, three factors may be at play.

One factor is the need for politicians to attract attention. Trump does not need this, but most politicians do. Most Americans probably never heard of Utah representative Jason Chaffetz until social media made him a temporary social pariah, drawing the ire of thousands of attendees at a town hall meeting for refusing to investigate Trump’s conflicts of interest. Even with his high-profile position as House Oversight Committee chairman, and his missteps in handling the investigation into Russian interference in the U.S. election, Chaffetz is still relatively unknown to most Americans. If he wished to draw attention to himself or to champion a cause, he could consult with a celebrity. Likewise, Russ Feingold is a Senate veteran but hardly a household name. His alliance with Affleck was, in part, to focus public attention on the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

While there is a logic to a politician working with a celebrity to raise the profile of an issue, evidence to support this notion has been sparse. Some scholars have argued that celebrities can be helpful to advocacy groups, but may not be powerful enough to gain significant attention or influence the public agenda. Celebrity involvement may attract headlines, but it represents “just one small piece of the media’s attention to these larger political issues or causes” (Becker 2010, *96).* Celebrities may be more likely to conveniently and cynically “jump on the bandwagon” after a politician has already focused media attention on an issue or if the issue is already generally salient across media sources (Hawkins 2011). Indeed, Trump did not invent birtherism. He joined the cause. In addition, celebrities may be more effective at attracting the attention of niche audiences rather than broad segments of the population (Marwick 2013; Senft 2008; Thrall et al. 2008). Given the mixed and pessimistic outcomes of this literature, further research is needed. Can celebrities attract attention to causes, and what kind of attention can they garner? Are they more effective at attracting headlines in newspapers or in the more photo-friendly world of broadcast journalism? If they are effective at commanding media attention, what factors contribute to these abilities?

A second factor that attracts politicians to celebrities is the potential credibility they may bring to an issue. This factor is far from obvious, because celebrities are presumed to have very little credibility outside of entertainment. One would assume that scientists, scholars, and business

leaders make much more credible advocates. In short, it is not difficult to understand why celebrities would want to speak their conscience and how they might gain some attention for an issue. It is much more difficult to understand why anyone in the public would care. As a result, it is not surprising that political science researchers have focused little attention on the perceived credibility of celebrities. If the person who plays the next Batman is simply “eye candy” to garner attention for a cause, credibility really does not matter.

The marketing and advertising literature has demonstrated that celebrity credibility may affect the power of a product endorsement. The more popular and credible the celebrities, the more likely individuals will agree with them, particularly if they are attractive (W. J. Brown, Basil, and Bocarnea 2003; D. J. Jackson 2008; Khong Kok Wei, and You Li Wu 2013). Businesses make regular decisions about whether a celebrity endorsement will improve or damage brand image (Atkin and Block 1983; Elberse and Verleun 2012; Freiden 1984; Kamins 1970; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983; Roy 2012). However, do celebrities carry much political credibility, and are all celebrity endorsements equally positive? The massive amount of celebrity support Hillary Clinton enjoyed was not enough for her to win the Electoral College (Robehmed 2016). On the other hand, she was running against celebrity Trump. Similarly, Leah Wright Rigueur, a professor of public policy at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, argues that Trump’s meeting with Kanye West would not give Trump credibility with black voters (Holland 2016). Would different celebrities enhance Trump’s credibility? If celebrities are credible, what is the source of that credibility?

A third factor that may influence public officials to ally with celebrities is their ability to persuade. We know, within certain circumstances, that celebrities can sell toothpaste and cars (Atkin and Block 1983; Boorstin 1992, 162; Gamson 2007; Miciah and Shanklin 1994). Do they have the same ability to succeed in the more serious business of selling issues, causes, and candidates? Research has been limited on this question. The most common studies focus on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements of candidates (Boon and Lomore 2001; Brubaker 2011; Garthwaite and Moore 2008; Gunter 2014, 142; D. J. Jackson and Darrow 2005; Lammie 2007; MediaVest USA 2004; Meyer and Gamson 1995; Nownes 2012; O’Regan 2014; Pease and Brewer 2008; L. Powell and Cowart 2012;

Schuessler 2000; Wood and Herbst 2007). However, very little has been written on the effectiveness of celebrities in issue advocacy. The extant literature offers some cautious and limited optimism for the possibilities for celebrity persuasion. Becker (2010, *96)* argues that "issue advocacy efforts can strengthen public agreement with accepted political arguments and in some cases can also make unpopular political statements seem more acceptable—especially among members of an attentive or captive audience" (D. J. Jackson and Darrow 2005).

However, additional research is needed to support or challenge the notion that celebrities are persuasive in their advocacy of political issues. Not all celebrities are equally good at selling consumer products (Tuttle 2012), so it is likely that they are also not equally good at selling political issues and causes. If celebrities are persuasive, what factors contribute to this ability? Might there be a mismatch of celebrity and issue? Might a conservative politician be seen as less persuasive when standing next to a liberal celebrity? Could a celebrity more effectively persuade someone to support a school funding bill where there is a lot of consensus already than to support a wedge issue like gun control? Moreover, could celebrities' polemic political statements hurt their credibility with certain audiences? At the end of the day, perhaps Bono, Symmonds, and Affleck—for all of their money, fame, and gifts in entertainment—really are incapable of commanding much attention outside of tabloids. Maybe they have less credibility than politicians. And perhaps their powers of persuasion are little better than those of any politician or citizen.

If celebrities are found to be politically influential, the normative question remains: Is this a good thing? This question has received far more attention in the academic literature than the aforementioned empirical questions.[3] Ben Affleck's involvement in politics may be good for raising awareness about the Congo, and it may be good for his image. However, is his activism good for democracy? Many have argued that celebrity advocacy illustrates a democratization of politics, where citizens other than politicians may gain media attention and advance issues on behalf of worthy causes that would not otherwise receive public attention. As citizens have felt more jaded about elected officials, they have felt less jaded about celebrity activists (West and Orman 2003, x). Moreover, the identification and idolization of celebrities may inspire some citizens who otherwise

would not be involved in politics to pay attention and perhaps even to get involved, which offers a potential benefit to participatory democracy.

Others have argued that the possible perception of celebrities as opportunistic may numb citizens to the seriousness of the issues.[4] In addition, those who follow celebrity news are often the least likely to be involved—or even interested—in politics. Thus rising coverage of a few celebrities' pet issues may raise awareness, but may not lead to any increased likelihood to act or vote. Perhaps celebrity activism leads citizens to become even more apathetic or to withdraw from political processes (Couldry and Markham 2007; Tsaliki, Frangonikolopoulos, and Huliaras 2011). Perhaps a loose social media awareness of an issue, an identification with a celebrity activist, and a compulsion to share articles or comment on social media convinces the average citizen consumer that s/he has already performed a civic duty.

Finally, if we accept the purported benefit of celebrity politics—that the system is somehow more democratized and accessible to nonpoliticians—we must also accept the potential downside of that promise. Do we want inexperienced citizens or celebrities with disproportionate access to mass media to influence the political system or to attain higher office? Donald Trump is the perfect manifestation of everything that is promising and perilous about celebrity politics. On the one hand, he is a real outsider who has the potential to radically change the operations of the presidency and introduce policies and reforms that may have been beyond the scope of conventional politicians. On the other hand, his inexperience, lack of expertise, and potential conflicts of interest led to many tactical and policy missteps early in his administration. To the right, he is a hero who is ready to drain the swamp, attack the media, and potentially bring radical action out of gridlock. To the left, he is a demagogue whose disregard for republican principles and the judiciary, coupled with his ability to turn supporters against individuals and businesses with a single tweet, makes him dangerous for democracy. Unlike most other politicians coming into public office, Trump has a base of power that extends beyond the power of the office of the presidency—a power that may allow him to do things that other presidents could not. Will this power that offers so much informal influence supersede the formal institutional powers bestowed by the Constitution?

While there is much still to study about the relationship between celebrity politics and democracy, it is beyond the scope of this work to engage extensively with this issue. This book does not endeavor to provide deep insights on whether celebrities empower quality citizens, demobilize an ignorant public that is otherwise hungry for social media and reality television, or mobilize the disenfranchised to support demagogues. However, this book does provide research that supports the empirical base of that literature, and to that extent it may be helpful to the extension of that academic discussion. If it can be shown that celebrities are adept at gaining attention for political issues, that they are more credible than traditional politicians are, and that they are uniquely persuasive, normative scholars will continue to wrestle with these normative challenges.

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF CELEBRITY INFLUENCE

Political scientists have long assumed that public officials crave power in order to achieve their objectives. Powerful public officials also solicit the help of others who are powerful in the pursuit of their self-interest. Might celebrities have some “powers” not available to the ordinary politician that would enable them to influence political processes and outcomes? What powers might Bono have, for example, that Bush did not? The purpose of this book is to answer these questions.

Too Much Information: The Relationship between Celebrity and the Media

An understanding of celebrity power is only possible by understanding the growth of the mass media in the twentieth century and its interdependence with the growth of celebrity. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine celebrities with any significant influence without the existence of a media-drenched society. Granted, celebrities have skills that make them experts at communication. They evoke emotions through their physical abilities, their speech, their ability to tell stories or to relate to audiences through music. However, the media acts as a megaphone that increases the volume of

celebrities' voices and—to borrow President Teddy Roosevelt's language—gives them a "bully pulpit" comparable to that of presidents and politicians.

Celebrities have been around at least since ancient Greece, although celebrated public figures of those days do not resemble those of today. Roots of modern celebrity can be traced to the eighteenth century as the earliest wide-circulation newspapers were established (Gunter 2014). Giuseppe Garibaldi, an Italian general and politician, is considered by some to be the first modern celebrity. Nineteenth-century British newspapers featured stories of his heroic exploits, and a small industry emerged around Garibaldi merchandise, including pictures, figurines, plates, cups, and tankards (Kehoe 2017). In the United States, Mark Twain copyrighted not only his books but also his name and image, using them to sell "playing cards, Oldsmobile cars, Pullman train passenger cars, baking flour, jumping frog mechanical banks, scrapbooks, photograph albums, cookbooks, postcards, sewing machines, shaving soap, fine china, decorative silver spoons, and, of course, whiskey and cigars" (Trombley 2010). Twain is an exemplar of one of the earliest modern American celebrities and an outspoken political satirist and critic—a reminder that politics, celebrity, and satire have been intertwined long before the powerful influence of Jon Stewart's *Daily Show* and his successors: Stephen Colbert, Samantha Bee, and John Oliver.

In the early to mid-twentieth century, phonograph records, film, and radio placed singers, actors, and athletes in the national spotlight. The diversification of media access and the speed of delivery—from newspapers and books, records and films, to television and ultimately to the internet—created more demand for content and changed the kind of information that media organizations wished to deliver to their consumers (Adorno 2002; Fenster and Swiss 1999, 226; Marshall 1997, 63–64). As celebrities gained in public attention, they also grew in stature and sometimes in credibility. This attention led to political statements and activism, predating Bono, Affleck, Symmonds, and countless others by decades.

In the late 1920s, Will Rogers became one of the most influential celebrities in America and may likely be considered the father of modern celebrity activists, fully utilizing these emerging technologies. He started out as a circus and vaudeville performer, and millions watched his movies or listened to him on the radio. He wrote a weekly syndicated column for the *New York Times* between 1922 and 1935 in which he skewered

American politicians across the political spectrum. He spoke at a Democratic National Convention; testified before Congress on flood relief; unofficially advised secretaries of war, aeronautics, and the Navy; and was a "frequent, savvy, and welcome presence in the hallways of the Capitol and in informal summits of the powerful" (Yagoda 2000, 293). According to biographer Ben Yagoda, he "became the political equivalent of a reversible figure—the psychological test in which a wavy line on a blank page can be seen to be either a table lamp or a human profile," which enabled him to appeal to a broad spectrum of citizens because of—or despite—his political convictions. Politicians "knew better than to overlook what he had to say on the issues" (Yagoda 2000, 291–92). NPR's Scott Simon argued that when Rogers passed away, "the most famous man in America besides Franklin D. Roosevelt died, and in 1935, I'm not sure you needed to add a 'besides'" (Rogers, Sterling, and Sterling 1993; Simon 2015).

With the onset of the Great Depression and the ascension of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in Germany, the political atmosphere changed, and with it, the relationship among celebrities, politicians, and the media. In World War II, the entertainment industry was famously employed to produce pro-American propaganda in music and film. However, not all celebrities acted in concert with the U.S. government. Director/actor Charlie Chaplin satirized the "automation of the individual" in films such as *Modern Times* (1936) and Hitler himself in *The Great Dictator* (1940). He was booed at the premiere of *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947) for criticizing American capitalism and weapons of mass destruction. In response to his criticism, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover publicly discredited Chaplin by using a paternity suit to bring criminal charges against him (Larcher 2011, 29; Maland 1991, 164, 204–5). Likewise, aviator Charles Lindbergh was famous for his transatlantic flight and for what the media termed the "Crime of the Century"—the kidnapping and murder of his twenty-month-old son. In both cases, every major newspaper in the United States was willing to provide serial details of these events. As war with Germany loomed, Lindbergh became the spokesperson for the America First movement in 1940, which advocated isolationism and neutrality with Germany, and he charged that the British and the Jews were conspiring to bring America into the war. After speaking to overflow crowds in Madison Square Garden, he was publicly denounced by President Roosevelt (Duffy and Weiner 2010; Lardner 2015).

Prominent celebrities also pressured the government to support controversial stances on civil rights. Famous contralto Marian Anderson found herself in the middle of a dispute when the Daughters of the American Revolution denied her access to sing at Washington's Constitution Hall because of her race. This event drew criticism and support for Anderson from Eleanor Roosevelt and the Roosevelt administration. As a result, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes arranged for her to perform at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 before a clearly integrated audience of 75,000 people (Stamberg 2014).

Likewise, President Eisenhower's initially weak response to segregation at Central High School in Little Rock in 1957 drew fire from jazz musician Louis Armstrong, who was quoted on September 17 as saying, "The government can go to hell." He cancelled his plans to appear on a goodwill tour to the Soviet Union, creating a public relations disaster for the U.S. government. Some citizens called for boycotts of Armstrong's concerts, and the Ford Motor Company intended to pull advertising from a Bing Crosby special in which Armstrong was to appear. The controversy only ended when Eisenhower ultimately sent troops to Little Rock to enforce desegregation on September 24 (Margolick 2007).

The consequences were more dire for Paul Robeson, one of the most famous and respected celebrities of his day. As a singer, stage and film actor, and professional athlete, he spoke out on behalf of black culture and workers' rights as early as 1934. He was ultimately blacklisted between 1950 and 1955, in part because of his advocacy of communism (Duberman 1996).

Those celebrities who spoke out against the United States or American capitalism were exceptional. Prior to the 1960s, celebrities were largely dependent upon their employers (A. W. Campbell 1994; Williamson 2011; Zirin 2009). In addition to the U.S. government's attempts to convert entertainment material to propaganda and to blacklist anyone in the entertainment industry who might have expressed dissent, the industry itself also had mechanisms to prevent the free expression of its artists. In the early to mid-twentieth century, actors and musicians exclusively signed to a single studio or record company. Athletes, likewise, were not free agents. Movie studios, record companies, and sports teams were concerned about controlling the image of celebrities for fear that the tarnishing of a celebrity's image would adversely affect movie or album sales or

attendance at sporting events. Celebrities that had commercial corporate sponsorship had even less freedom of expression for fear that speaking out could risk losing a product endorsement. Contracts sometimes stipulated that the entertainer or athlete could not speak against the interests of the employer. For example, Warner Brothers prevented Ronald Reagan from leading a protest against nuclear weapons in 1945, arguing that it was a contractual violation and that it would bring negative publicity to the studio (Lettow 2006). Even today, "morals clauses" in entertainment contracts are commonly used as an excuse to release actors whose behavior undermines the success of a project. In 2011 Charlie Sheen's erratic behavior led to his release from the popular sitcom *Two and a Half Men* (A. W. Campbell 1994, 394; Huliaras and Tzifakis 2011; "Morals Clause at Issue in Charlie Sheen Legal Fight" 2011; Williamson 2011; Zirin 2009).

Folk singers such as Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger wrote and performed music that many thought was subversive, but carried on the oral tradition of a political troubadour that had existed for centuries. By the 1940s and '50s, these troubadours' voices and messages could be recorded and distributed through vinyl records and broadcast over radio waves on stations that were desperate for content to fill airtime. Like Robeson, many of these musicians were blacklisted from radio and television in order to prevent their leftist messages from entering public discourse (Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Greenway 1977; Phull 2008).

As celebrities became wealthier and more autonomous, many risks to political activism declined. By the 1960s, the record-buying public accepted folk and rock musicians as artists with rights to express themselves politically (Ballantine 1984; Balliger 1999; Brackett 1999; Fischlin and Heble 2003; Grossberg 1987; Marshall 1997; Mattern 1998; Small 1987). The Beatles' and Bob Dylan's wealth and commercial success proved that popular musicians could make strong political statements without undermining their career. Their counterculture audiences were increasingly receptive to politically challenging messages and believed that musicians who were more outspoken were more authentic. By the 1970s, the notion of musicians making political statements was not typical but was also no longer shocking.

Some actors became increasingly politically involved in the 1960s, despite the chilling effect the blacklists had in Hollywood. Actors Charlton Heston, James Garner, Sidney Poitier, Marlon Brando, Burt Lancaster, Paul

Newman, and Joanne Woodward were involved in the 1963 March on Washington, and Jane Fonda spoke out against the war in Vietnam (Cannon 2013; Gunter 2014, 141). However, the industry had changed little since the 1940s, and these actors were exceptional. Chaplin could make films like *The Great Dictator* because he had financial independence and total control over his product, and eventually he moved outside of the United States, but there were still potential legal and commercial consequences. More actors became politically involved in the 1970s and beyond, as actors had more freedom to enter into different contracts with different studios. Even then, actors were more likely than musicians to be restricted by morals clauses.

Professional athletes are still bound to high-profile advertising campaigns that may limit their expression (Williamson 2011). Thus the 1950s and 1960s saw rare expressions of political dissent. Jackie Robinson organized with the NAACP. Boxer Muhammad Ali went to jail for refusing to serve in Vietnam. Olympic runners Tommie Smith and John Carlos protested discrimination against African Americans at the 1968 Olympic Games by displaying the black power salute during the playing of the national anthem. Basketball legend Michael Jordan is the more typical exemplar of the twentieth-century athlete. When given the opportunity to endorse political candidates, he stayed silent. The phrase “Republicans buy shoes, too” was probably incorrectly attributed to Jordan. However, it does neatly summarize the attitude of many athletes who perceived that they would pay commercial consequences for taking political stands (Wagner 2016).

The twenty-first century has found a radical increase in athlete activism. Professional football players Brendon Ayanbadejo and Chris Kluwe have advocated for LGBT rights across society and in the National Football League. In 2003 Toni Smith-Thompson, senior captain of the women’s basketball team at Manhattanville College in New York, turned her back on the flag during the national anthem to protest the war in Iraq. LeBron James and others in the NBA criticized President Trump’s first travel ban, which was intended to prevent Muslims from entering the United States. Six of the New England Patriots refused to attend a meeting with President Trump after winning the Super Bowl. Perhaps most famously, Colin Kaepernick refused to stand for the national anthem during football games in the 2016 season because “he didn’t want to demonstrate pride in a country that oppresses black people and people of color” (Ayanbadejo 2009; Farhi 2016; T. Goldman 2016; Inskeep n.d.; Kluwe 2012; Mather 2017; NPR Staff

2015; Torre 2017). However, commercial incentives still dissuade political activism among athletes. Kaepernick himself is a case in point. His performance on the field was weak early in the 2016 season but rebounded by December, causing some commentators to suggest that he would be a good pick as a free agent for the 2017 season. In October 2016 *Forbes* reported that the NFL was "losing millions of TV viewers because of national anthem protests" (Ozanian 2016). Whether or not this is literally true—and whether or not Kaepernick deserves the blame for this loss of revenue—these perceptions have harmed Kaepernick's chances of being picked up by an NFL team in 2017 and likely affected his potential earnings. Indeed, according to sports commentator Adam Stites, "The media whirlwind surrounding his protests made it entirely feasible that no other team would take on the distraction and criticism that would come with signing Kaepernick" (Stites 2016).

Blurred Lines: What Is the Difference between a Politician and a Celebrity?

A celebrity "is a person who has a high public profile, usually promoted by appearances in the mass media and they are consequently readily recognized by others . . . characterized by exceptional or extraordinary qualities in terms of their abilities, attractiveness, personalities, and lifestyles" (Gunter 2014, 2). They tend to have occupations that put them in the public light—such as artists, entertainers, and sports stars, although some are business people, lawyers, politicians, and scientists (Gunter 2014, 2–3; Marwick 2013). Moreover, celebrities are not personally known to their audiences, yet they are connected through "para-social interaction," a phenomenon when people experience intimacy and familiarity with individuals and characters when listening to their music, watching their displays of athleticism, or seeing them perform. These relationships with distant characters and personalities that seem immediate and intimate can be emotionally gratifying because audiences come to implicitly act as if these characters were their friends (Horton and Wohl 1956; Marwick 2013, 119).

Becoming a celebrity does not necessitate special talent. Some are the epitome of Andy Warhol's famous 1968 remark, "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes" (Guinn and Perry 2005). For

example, Ken Bone, an attendee at one of the 2016 presidential debates, famously asked the candidates a calm and reasoned question, sparking a brief burst of celebrity on social media (Simon 2017). Others became celebrities for simply associating with other celebrities. Some have been born into famous families, such as Peaches Geldof (daughter of musician Bob Geldof and television presenter Paula Yates) or Paris Hilton (heir to the Hilton Hotel fortune) or the Kardashians (children of the high-profile attorney in the O. J. Simpson trial, Robert Kardashian, Kris Kardashian Jenner, and former Olympian Bruce Jenner—now known as Caitlyn Jenner). Kevin Federline was famous not for being a dancer but for marrying Britney Spears. Instead of being famous in their own right, these figures capitalized on the fame of their family and associates in order to establish their own celebrity.

In addition, traditional celebrities have become more politicized while political figures increasingly behave as Hollywood actors, engaging in the image building common in the entertainment industry (Corner and Pels 2003, 2; West and Orman 2003, x). Conventional celebrities and modern politicians have blurred as actors such as Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger became elected public officials, and presidents from John F. Kennedy to Barack Obama achieved a virtual celebrity status (Street 2004; West and Orman 2003). Celebrity political activities are still an unusual attraction—fascinating fish-out-of-water stories compared with the less attractive, less glamorous political figures who are more likely to feature in typical stories about politics and policy. As a result, journalists chase celebrities, and politicians emphasize image over substance in an attempt to relate to the public in the same way that celebrities do.

Darrell M. West and John Orman document this convergence by denoting four categories of celebrities: political newsworthies, legacies, famed nonpoliticos, and event celebrities. “Political newsworthies” include figures such as James Carville, George Stephanopoulos, Mary Matalin, Jesse Jackson, and others who are skilled at appearing on television, offering political punditry, and simultaneously informing and entertaining. “Legacies” are those political figures who are descendants of powerful political families or figures such as the Kennedys, Bushes, and Clintons. “Famed nonpoliticos” include two distinctive groups: elected officials who gained fame before running for office, such as Ronald Reagan, Jesse Ventura, Bill Bradley, John Glenn, Sonny Bono, and Jack Kemp, and

unelected citizens who lobby or speak for causes based on their fame, such as Charlton Heston, Jane Fonda, Robert Redford, Willie Nelson, Barbra Streisand, Warren Beatty, and Martin Sheen. Finally, “event celebrities” are overnight celebrities who rise to fame based on a tragedy or predicament, such as Sarah Brady, wife of James Brady, who went on to become a prominent gun control spokeswoman (West and Orman 2003, 2–8).

The strength of West and Orman’s categorization is their embrace of all forms of celebrity. As they argue, even Anita Hill, an obscure assistant in the Department of Education who leveled charges of sexual harassment against Clarence Thomas during his Supreme Court confirmation hearings, had more than fifteen minutes of fame when she raised a national dialogue about the subject. At that time, she was an unlikely celebrity who was at the center of political controversy. West and Orman’s model implies that the exposure given to any of these categories of celebrities provides them with a pulpit to advance their message. Indeed, the concept of event celebrities could even encompass internet celebrities, who may become temporarily famous for appearing in a video gone viral.

However, the model says little about the effect of celebrity intervention in politics. It puts public figures into categories but does not offer any insights about celebrities’ sources of power and influence. What does calling a public figure a “famed nonpolitico” say about their capacity to attract attention, to speak credibly, or to persuade? The inclusiveness of these categories is also a potential weakness. The categories are descriptive but not particularly distinct or meaningful when making comparisons. When it comes to power and access in the “famed nonpolitico” category, for example, was Sonny Bono’s power truly equivalent to Ronald Reagan’s? Was Willie Nelson’s power as a public spokesman for marijuana legalization comparable to Charlton Heston’s when he was the president of the National Rifle Association? Are “legacies” such as the Kennedys and Bushes powerful because they are celebrities, because they were elected to powerful public offices, or because they were very wealthy? What about people like Barack Obama, who had no real fame before being elected as an Illinois senator but gained a sort of enduring celebrity status as a result of his inspirational speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2004? Moreover, given Obama’s popularity in 2007 and his iconic status as America’s first black president, it is quite likely that he may continue to be treated as much like a star as a former president.

Finally, this model does not comment on what kinds of celebrities gain media attention at particular times or on particular issues. To what extent do traditional celebrities compete with traditional politicians for this space? Do media organizations treat celebrities with the same credibility as public officials? This model offers no answers to these questions. Celebrity status does not always last. Not all celebrities have the same status, and some are more famous within some communities than others (Gunter 2014, 2–3; Marwick 2013). Since this model is merely a categorization of celebrity politics, it implies that celebrities are roughly equivalent, because they all are capable of gaining media attention or at least have appeared in media outlets for various reasons. Thus, while it points out the various kinds of people who have found fame in various ways, it identifies no meaningful difference between Bill Clinton and Lady Gaga, as long as they are famous and talk about politics. In short, the model presumes that anyone who is famous is a celebrity, which makes it impossible to differentiate between politicians and celebrities.

Politicians and celebrities are quite different in their occupations, in their sources of power, and in the way that they go about influencing others. Politicians have legitimacy and are supported by bureaucracies that execute their decisions. Celebrities have no such policymaking capabilities unless they put their performing career on hiatus and run for public office. Thus, in this book, for the purpose of precise measurement, celebrities and politicians are operationally separate. A celebrity is someone who is otherwise famous—usually involved in the media and entertainment industry. Celebrities who advocate on public issues or get involved in political organizing are not politicians. A politician is a public official who holds (or held) public office. Bono is a celebrity. George W. Bush is a politician.

Once an entertainer runs for public office, s/he ceases being a celebrity and begins a career as a politician. When elected, public officials do not have to engage exclusively in agenda setting through insurgent grassroots methods or as a politician’s guest at a dinner, although these approaches are available to them. In this way, celebrities who engage in political activity are more like activists and less like public officials. The main meaningful similarity between celebrities and politicians is their fame and the high-profile public platform, adulation, and criticism that come with fame. Thus,

for the purpose of comparison, there is utility in treating them as separate political actors.

Ronald Reagan is the perfect exemplar. He was an entertainer when he became involved in politics. He was a liberal celebrity activist who supported Franklin Roosevelt and appeared with Harry Truman during a campaign event in 1948 (McCullough 1992). His perspectives shifted during the Cold War, as he grew more concerned about communism. By 1964 he was entrenched enough in the conservative movement of the Republican Party to give the keynote address at the Republican National Convention. In 1966 he was elected governor of California. When that happened, he was no longer an actor, even if he continued to use his acting skills to communicate with his constituents. This deep political experience from activism to public speaking to public office is as conventional as a noncelebrity's path. He was an activist, a networker, a fixture of the establishment, and eventually a candidate and an official, gaining crucial political experience until he arrived at the Oval Office. He just happened to have started his career as an actor.

Celebrities such as Arnold Schwarzenegger in California and Jesse Ventura in Minnesota also launched successful gubernatorial campaigns. Schwarzenegger may not have held public office, but before becoming governor of California, he served as the chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports under President George H. W. Bush. He then held a similar position in the state of California, serving Governor Pete Wilson, before writing and sponsoring the successful Proposition 49 to fund after-school education programs. Likewise, Jesse Ventura served as mayor of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, before running for governor.

It is rare when a politician becomes a full-time entertainer after a life in politics, although there are some examples. Long before becoming a talk show host, Jerry Springer was elected to city council and then mayor of Cincinnati and ran a failed 1982 gubernatorial campaign in Ohio. Other than briefly considering Senate runs in 2000 and 2004, he was strictly an entertainer and a celebrity from 1991 onward with *The Jerry Springer Show.* Actor Clint Eastwood spent most of his career in entertainment, taking a short break to serve as the nonpartisan mayor of Carmel and in various capacities in appointed state positions for the state of California. However, these activities have primarily been avocations as he continued acting and directing films. Eastwood and Springer are primarily celebrities.

However, it is much more difficult to categorize Schwarzenegger, considering that he served two terms as governor and then returned to acting. Likewise, Tennessee senator Fred Thompson also went from acting to politics and back to acting again.

What is Donald Trump? Prior to being elected president, he was a celebrity. After winning the presidency, he became a politician. However, considering West and Orman's model implying a broad definition of celebrity, I conducted a survey in October 2016 to determine whether respondents believed that Trump was a politician or a celebrity. Would his status as presidential nominee make him seem less like a celebrity and more like a politician? Using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, the survey asked 304 respondents whether they agreed with the statement "Donald Trump is more of a celebrity than a politician." As a benchmark, the survey asked the same question about Hillary Clinton, considering that Clinton was indeed famous but also very much a traditional establishment politician. In the results, Clinton's mean score was 3.12, suggesting that she is in the middle: perhaps famous for being a legacy politician, to borrow West and Orman's term, but not completely agreeing with the celebrity tag. Donald Trump's mean score was 4.50, suggesting a very high level of agreement that he is more of a celebrity than a politician.

Indeed, Trump was a celebrity. But he was also more. In the past, celebrity politicians were people who gave up their "day job" as entertainers to run for or assume public office. Activist entertainers advocated on issues. Trump blurred those lines. His lack of experience in public office made his victory a surprise, suggesting that celebrities can skip lower offices and go straight to the presidency. His experience as a spokesperson for the birther movement made him more like a celebrity activist. Trump also did not exactly quit his day job. He maintained his businesses, occasionally used the campaign as a platform to advance his business interests, and utilized his fame to say and do things that were foreign to a conventional politician. He actively ran against the party establishment. Yet once he became the Republican standard-bearer, he was every bit the nominee as Mitt Romney was in 2012 or Ronald Reagan was in 1980. Likewise, as president he has continued to deploy the tools of the celebrity activist—criticizing public figures on Twitter or in the media as if he had never won the presidency and attacking the government as if he

were not part of it. Donald Trump is just as much president as Barack Obama was before him. However, the lines between Trump as celebrity and Trump as politician are likely to continue to blur as his presidency continues.

A Model of Celebrity Power

To be fair to West and Orman, their model does not aspire to answer all of these questions or make these distinctions. They did not seek to theorize celebrity power. Their framework was distinctive because it illustrated how fame provided a platform to so many different kinds of potentially political actors, and they wrote their book at a time when few in academia were taking celebrity politics seriously. Thus the problem is not with their model but with the lack of theoretical development around the concept of celebrity influence. A perusal of the celebrity politics literature reveals that few scholars offer a clear framework explaining the foundation of celebrity power and comparing it with that of conventional politicians.

Partzsch (2015) offers one such theoretical answer to the power question. She argues that celebrity power includes two dimensions. The first, “power with,” suggests that celebrities have the power to bring “together people from different backgrounds, such as international, business, and civil society organizations.” The second, “power over,” explains how some celebrities engage in a Weberian zerosum game to influence the thoughts and actions of others. The use of resources to influence others is known as “visible power.” “Hidden power” is that which is not noticed: the ability to get others to discuss one issue at the expense of other issues that remain hidden, or the ability to connect with institutions and raise money in ways that are not explicit in the public sphere. “Invisible power” is the ability to influence ideas through forms of persuasion.

Partzsch’s theoretical model offers a way to conceptualize some sources of celebrity power. Her approach does not apply to conventional politicians, although one could apply it that way. Politicians have the ability to bring people together from different backgrounds and to influence others through visible, hidden, and invisible power. However, further specification is needed to capture the full range of power capabilities available to politicians and celebrities alike, particularly since there are some forms of power that may be unique to one group and not to the other. The legitimacy

that comes from holding public office, for example, has long been established as a source of power in the sociology and political science literature, and it does not easily fit into Partzsch's categories. For the purposes of this study and for the broader literature, a theoretical power framework has to be broad enough to encompass the range of powers available to both kinds of political actors and specific enough to integrate with the existing political science literature. Moreover, some concepts can also be drawn from the business and advertising literature, which has been documenting the impact of celebrities in advertising for far longer than the political science literature has.

The literature on activism, social movements, and transnational advocacy networks emphasize theoretical concepts that further specify the kinds of activities and abilities utilized by political actors to influence others. "Information politics," for example, refers to the ability of political actors to generate information and to deliver it efficiently and effectively. "Accountability politics" includes the ability of activists and advocacy organizations to hold people accountable for their actions by blaming or shaming them (Batliwala and Brown 2006; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Rodrigues 2004; Shaw 2005). "Symbolic politics," the ability of public figures to reference "symbols, actions, or stories" to simplify complex and distant issues for the purpose of consolidating or dividing audiences, has also been a long-standing, if underspecified, expression of power (Edelman 1985; Keck and Sikkink 1998, 23–24; Lim 2012; Santesson-Wilson 2001). A more precise understanding of credibility is also key to understanding whether and when celebrities may be able to project influence. Those who are not credible or perceived as experts presumably may be less influential, although results across studies are mixed (Atkin and Block 1983; Becker 2010; Buhr, Simpson, and Pryor 1987; Lammie 2007; Maddux and Rogers 1980; Ohanian 1991; Speck, Schumann, and Thompson 1988).

An alternative approach is to integrate French and Raven's (1959) bases of power model. This model encompasses the diversity of power sources described above and utilizes an existing framework that is broadly accepted by the academic community. This allows scholars to build upon the existing literature on power while aligning the concepts that political scientists employ when trying to explain media impact and persuasion. At the same time, the model also includes a focus on material resources, legitimacy, bureaucracies, and other sources of power that are more available to public

officials and less available to celebrities. Moreover, since it was originally designed to explain power relations across many contexts, it allows scholars to more easily compare political actors that have different characteristics and power sources.

French and Raven specify six types of power: legitimate, expert, reward, coercive, informational, and referent (Costa and Martins 2011; French and Raven 1959; Raven 1993). Legitimate power refers to the formal power exercised by those who formally have a title and are placed in a position of power. Expertise power refers to the knowledge and credibility that individuals hold and how they convert these into power. Reward and coercive power refers to the ability to punish or grant favor to those who behave accordingly, both of which include elements of psychological and material power. Informational power is the ability to persuade through manipulation of information, and it includes many of the concepts described in the political science and business literature above, including information and accountability politics. Referent power includes charismatic power and refers to the ability of a political actor to connect and identify with an audience. Thus Partzsch's "power with" would be considered a referent power as well as symbolic politics. Her concept of "power over" finds expression in many of the other types of power. Visible power can be a form of reward or coercion. Hidden and invisible power both seem to be encompassed by informational power. Chapter 2 further specifies French and Raven's model, connecting it to the literature on the media and persuasion and to the current literature on celebrity politics.

French and Raven's model offers a way to operationalize the powers accessible to public officials versus celebrities and to compare their abilities and attributes. To understand how this power translates into the policymaking realm, I draw from the agenda-setting literature, which connects the roles of the media, activist and interest groups, and politicians, and explains how they work together or compete to affect public policy.

Some political actors—politicians and activists alike—who want to accomplish political goals are known as policy entrepreneurs. They employ strategies to get the powerful and the public to focus on some issues and not on others, and to move policy in a desired direction. First, they attempt to diffuse or minimize cost and uncertainty, ideally by incorporating alliances of political actors to share their burden and support their efforts. Second, they engage in "shakeout" strategies where they attempt to disrupt the status

quo in order to exploit or open a "window of opportunity" to advance their issue (Crowley 2003, 13–14; Galligan and Burgess 2005; Jaiani and Whitford 2011; Kingdon 2010, 3, 87). During shakeout, politicians and celebrities may engage in insider activities where they work within policy institutions to pressure those in power through personal appeals. Likewise, they may employ outsider activities where they align with activists and civil society to gain attention from media organizations and pressure policy institutions from the outside (Baumgartner, Green-Pedersen, and Jones 2008; Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Birkland 1997; Cobb and Elder 1975; Cobb and Ross 1997, 26; Cook 2005; Iyengar 1994; Soroka 2003; Zaller 1992, 1996). Given the previous assumption that celebrities are like high-profile activists, many engage in these strategies in order to achieve their ends.

SPOTLIGHTING, CREDIBILITY, AND PERSUASION

The empirical studies in this book illustrate three approaches to celebrity influence. The first, covered in chapter 3, focuses on the "spotlighting" effect, that is, celebrities' ability to step into a political situation and draw attention to an issue.[5] If celebrities publicly involve themselves in political issues, is there an increase in coverage on that issue? I answer this question by examining what happens when a celebrity intervenes in a political issue —by staging events, giving interviews, writing op-eds, and the like. When the celebrity speaks up, to what extent does the media cover the event? Does coverage of the event lead to a larger, amplified conversation about the issue in the media? Finally, how does their ability to draw media coverage compare with public officials' abilities?

A content analysis of media sources and time series reveals that celebrities can, with a high degree of certainty, command attention on political issues. In individual cases, they outperform politicians and presidents across broadcast and print media alike. In addition, the more celebrities involved in an intervention, the more likely they are to generate a positive spike in coverage. The same effect does not hold for more politicians at an intervention. Moreover, a discrete event or series of celebrity interventions can increase total media coverage on that issue, even increasing the number of stories that do not make direct reference to the

celebrity him/herself. The effect is evident across media types. In other words, if the broadcast media has an interview with George Clooney that does not receive direct coverage in the print media, there may still be a burst of media attention on that issue in newspapers.

The second manifestation of celebrity influence is credibility. Utilizing data drawn from an original survey, chapter 4 compares respondents' perceptions of politicians' credibility to celebrities' credibility. Results of the survey reveal that on some issues, such as same-sex marriage and increased funding for international AIDS prevention, celebrities are more credible than politicians are. In other cases, celebrities rank second behind a major party leader such as Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton. In no cases were celebrities ranked as least credible among political actors, and in most cases they are comparably credible to politicians. Given the general assumptions of the academic literature, we would rationally expect politicians to be more credible than celebrities on issues of public policy. The discovery that celebrities' credibility ranges from being indistinguishable from major politicians to being distinctly more credible is important, suggesting that celebrity power is greater than many have previously assumed.

When breaking these rankings down by party affiliation, it may not be completely surprising that a Republican may rank any celebrity higher than Barack Obama or that a Democrat may rank any celebrity higher than Donald Trump. This, too, is an interesting finding, suggesting that celebrities may be able to cross political lines more easily than established politicians can. Perhaps a partisan is more inclined to take a celebrity seriously over a representative of the opposing party. Moreover, as politicians are seen as less credible by voting publics, this study suggests that celebrities are filling that vacuum.

Finally, some celebrities are more credible than others are. Celebrity credibility seems to be tied to their experience and expertise. Those celebrities who are closely tied to issues, such as Ellen DeGeneres on gay rights, or those who have gained expertise and experience through formal learning and specialized knowledge, such as Bono on debt relief, makes them seem more credible. In addition, those celebrities who are more closely tied to established transnational advocacy networks are also seen as more credible.

Celebrities may be able to cast a spotlight on a political cause. They may have credibility that rivals or even exceeds politicians' credibility. However, do celebrities' issue endorsements affect the way people feel about an issue? Do people agree with their endorsements? To discover whether celebrities have the power of persuasion on political issues, chapter 5 presents the results of an original experimental design study intended to test how receptive respondents were to celebrity appeals. Each control and experimental group was exposed to detailed information on a public issue, offering reasons to support competing policy alternatives. However, the experimental group's information ended with an additional "frame," a persuasive statement in which a celebrity takes a side on an issue in order to persuade the target respondent. When focusing on two distinct issues—U.S. intervention in the Syrian conflict and legalization of same-sex marriage—some celebrities were found to be persuasive versus the control group, a finding that was statistically significant while controlling for age, gender, and party affiliation. Further analysis revealed that some celebrities were persuasive whether they advocated for or against a particular policy position, and this ability was independent of whether or not the subject likes the celebrity.

Upon further analysis, four factors were found to be related to the ability of celebrities to persuade. First, the more salient the issue is—that is, the more prominent the issue is in the mind of the public, the more likely celebrities are to be persuasive. Second, those issues that are highly polemic are more difficult for celebrity persuasion. As one might expect, a celebrity is unlikely to persuade people to change their minds about issues such as gun control. Third, celebrities who are perceived as more authentic based on their talents and abilities are more persuasive. Finally, celebrities seem to be able to persuade people on either side of a given issue. Celebrities may be persuasive irrespective of whether people believe they are advocating in a direction that is contrary to expectations.

Chapter 6 concludes that celebrities are comparably credible to politicians and capable of both spotlighting and persuading target audiences on political issues, making them potentially powerful and capable of affecting the public agenda. Clearly, not all celebrities are equally credible, equally able to garner attention, or equally able to persuade. However, many celebrities who engage in policy advocacy can be pivotal in achieving strategic goals. Moreover, the potential of celebrity power is substantial

enough that politicians might well benefit or suffer because of their interventions.

CELEBRITY INFLUENCE AND THE STUDY OF POLITICS

This book intends to explore why a public official would pay attention to a celebrity. Photos of President Bush and Bono in 2005–2006 speak volumes. At times Bush appears awkward in front of the camera, while Bono looks, well, like a rock star. If Bono can attract attention and is effective at persuasion, why would George Bush *not* want him on the team? Moreover, if Bono is actually better than Bush in at least one of these skills, Bush might perceive that he is *less* likely to "win" without Bono. Bono facilitates Bush's ability to push debt relief on the public agenda. On the other hand, if Bono is effective at this agenda-setting game and disagrees with Bush's policy, perhaps Bono is more threatening outside of the White House than inside it. If true, it may illuminate why Bush might tolerate or even appreciate Bono. In addition, if the answers are conditional—that is, if a celebrity is skeptical of his/her ability to command media attention in a particular situation—it might explain why s/he would pursue an insider strategy by playing the role of policy lobbyist and confidante instead of pursuing an outside media strategy.

If celebrities are more influential than conventional wisdom assumes, the implications are profound. Academically, it deflates a common assumption within political science that public officials are dominant in their influence over public discourse on political issues. This book certainly does not negate that in most areas of public policy, elected officials retain an incredible amount of power. It does, however, specify areas in which other political actors—in this case movie actors and the like—may compete and even exceed the power of traditional politicians over public agendas. While politicians remain dominant in legitimate power—and perhaps even in coercive, reward, and expert power—celebrities are capable of utilizing information and referent power in ways that may threaten or enhance the power of advocacy groups or legitimate politicians. Ultimately, exploring the role of celebrity in domestic and international politics may cause us to rethink our conceptualizations of power.

This book also contributes to our understanding of the relationship between celebrity and media, both internationally and in American studies. It discusses the way that capital and technology have opened avenues for the rise of celebrity in western society. Not only has this avenue opened an opportunity for celebrities to get involved in the political process, but it also has led traditional politicians to engage in the image-building strategies inherent in the entertainment industry. This is a striking cultural shift. If the modern media—with all of its technological delivery systems—is an electronic assembly line for the twenty-first century, then politicians and celebrities alike are the products. They roll to the end of the conveyor belt in shiny digital packages, electronically delivered to consumers who want their news and entertainment as tailored to their personalities and beliefs as their choice in designer clothes. In this environment, it is not at all surprising that less material forms of power such as credibility, expertise, authenticity, and the ability to manipulate information have put politicians and celebrities on more level playing fields. Indeed, the success of Donald Trump in 2016 and beyond has been to understand himself as a brand. He is the product at the end of the assembly line—the ultimate reality show—delivered to his target demographic and refined by information manipulation, image branding, and live political theater. Instead of purchasing the product, the excited consumer simply needs to show up at the polls and vote. According to Kranish and Fisher in their book, *Trump Revealed*, Trump believes that "all attention, fawning or critical or somewhere in between, accrues to his benefit, that his personal image defines his brand, that he *is* his brand" (Kranish and Fisher 2016, vii)

Academics who study policymaking might also find valuable insights in this book. Two major components of agenda setting—gaining attention for one's issue and persuading target audiences—are the key dependent variables in this study. This book borrows from the agenda-setting literature by conceptualizing celebrity activists as high-profile policy entrepreneurs. It contributes to this literature by explaining how activists with skills in spotlighting and persuasion may be able to affect the policy process. Moreover, it specifies conditions under which celebrities can gain attention and persuade target audiences.

In addition, much of the theory equating celebrities with activists is drawn from the transnational advocacy network and social movement literature. As a result, these findings also support this literature, particularly

illustrating how celebrities as activists exploit opportunity structures. It is this final point that reveals the book's practical potential. Advocacy organizations and politicians alike have employed celebrities for their own purposes. What happens when a celebrity speaks on an issue of public importance? This question is profoundly important for politicians and activists alike. When Bono supports debt relief for the developing world, does he create a global media conversation on the subject? Or is the discussion limited to the events where Bono appears? Is he persuasive? If Bono and his fellow celebrities are unsuccessful, perhaps politicians and activists are wasting their time with celebrity endorsements. Perhaps they lack the credibility necessary to make any measurable difference. On the other hand, if he is successful, he potentially creates a policy window for advocacy organizations to exploit the moment and pressure policymakers for change. This has important implications for policy strategists and activists alike. Bono's success implies that advocacy organizations and politicians who want to advance their issue may benefit from someone like Bono. As Michael Jordan sells Nikes, perhaps Bono can sell debt relief. If so, the introductory scenario of Bush jokingly snapping to attention as Bono walks by may be less ridiculous than previously assumed.

2. Ultimate Celebrity Makeover: How Do Celebrities Influence Others?

Ever since F. Scott Fitzgerald's pronouncement that "there are no second acts in American lives," Americans have made every effort to prove him wrong. Christopher Knight writes, "American lives in general are all about second acts—the quest for reinvention that goes to the spiritual core of a nation of immigrants" (Knight 2003). Reality television captures that spirit of reinvention. Shows like *A Makeover Story, Extreme Makeover, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, Extreme Weight Loss, Curb Appeal, The Swan, Trading Spaces, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy, America's Next Top Model, Second Chance*, and *What Not to Wear* demonstrate all angles of reinvention: new home, new clothes, new body, new face, new life. *The Apprentice* gave businesspeople a second chance to compete for new jobs. *The Celebrity Apprentice* gave many celebrities who were no longer on the A-list a second chance at access to viewers' living rooms.

Ironically, Donald Trump has something in common with his apprentices and immigrants—the former he famously demonized on his weekly show, and the latter he famously demonized on the road to the White House. Like immigrants, Trump had to learn new skills to overcome a difficult past, to integrate himself into a new environment, or like his apprentices, to win the new reality show. Trump's difficult past was in the 1990s, when he declared bankruptcy, suffered failures of multiple businesses, and lost the respect of vast numbers of Americans. His new reality show was the 2016 presidential election. Instead of being the boss, he was the contestant.

Donald Trump spent his life training for this reality show. Steve Inskeep of NPR posited the question, "Have we ever had a president who was himself so experienced at speaking with reporters, doing it personally, speaking anonymously at times and even, according to some reports which the president has denied, posing as his own PR man?" David Folkenflik

responded that Trump's life is a bit like the 1998 film *The Truman Show,* in which Jim Carrey plays a man starring in a reality show, but is not aware that this world where he has spent his entire life is only a stage on a set. The show's producers manipulate the environment to affect his life and sell consumer products. In the Trump show, however, Trump is the one at the center and the one controlling the environment. Folkenflik continues, "I cannot think of a time when Donald Trump, from his earliest days in real estate on, hasn't been a creature of the press, in the press and able particularly to manipulate it and to dictate its rhythms" (Folkenflik and Inskeep 2017).

In Trump's first act, he was a real estate developer, using his celebrity to "erect a network of ventures in gambling, sports, beauty pageants, television—an ever morphing array of ways to send the message that Trump meant ambition, wealth, and a distinctly personal expression of success." Whether he succeeded or failed, he forged his identity and image that he—not a team or his company—was the true "artisan of the deal" (Kranish and Fisher 2016, 121). By his thirties he became a "single-name celebrity, like Madonna or Beyoncé, like a rock star or a president." According to Kranish and Fisher in their book *Trump Revealed:* "He knew how to be famous, he knew how to win numbers, get ratings, make people take notice. More than three decades before he decided he wanted to be president, he showed up on Gallup's list of the ten men Americans most admired, running behind only the pope and some presidents. He'd made a lifelong study of how to create buzz" (3).

Trump was a "coveted novelty" in Hollywood, appearing on television shows such as *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, The Drew Carey Show, Spin City, Sex and the City,* and *The Nanny,* and films such as *Zoolander* and *Home Alone 2* (Kranish and Fisher 2016, 263). These appearances allowed him to poke fun at himself while advertising his brand—for free—to American consumers.

Because of over-leveraged casinos and hotels, his enterprises declared bankruptcy six times. Publicly Trump spun these bankruptcies as opportunities to cut debt: "We'll negotiate with the banks. We'll make a fantastic deal. You know, it's like on *The Apprentice.* It's not personal. It's just business" (Bingham 2011; Li 2011; Winter 2016). Privately Trump reflected, "That was a terrible, horrible period. All of a sudden you're in this position, when the world is falling around you, and it could take you

down" (Reinhard and Grant 2016). He was, in his own words, "worth negative $900 million." His popularity and respect had reached an all-time low. He was able eventually to regain control of his finances primarily through a more conservative strategy of selling his name as a brand rather than investing in real estate.

His real second chance began as a reality star.

Before Mark Burnett, creator of *Survivor,* approached Trump about hosting *The Apprentice,* Trump had never watched reality television and believed it was for "the bottom-feeders of society." However, when presented with the idea to use the program to display his brand and enterprises, Trump saw it as a "bridge to a new market, a new audience, and especially to young people." Burnett said it would allow him to "mold his image as never before, giving Americans the chance to see him in a way they perceived as unmediated, to remake himself as he saw fit" (Kranish and Fisher 2016, 211).

The Apprentice became the training ground to develop the image and entertainment skills that would help him to run a successful campaign. On the show, he would read an outline rather than memorize a script, and then improvise his interactions with contestants. Producers encouraged the ordinarily impatient Trump to "let the drama play out" so that viewers could watch the anguish and embarrassment of the contestants slowly emerge. In this process, Trump developed a "blunt speaking style accentuated by short, declarative sentences; delivering taunts—sometimes playful, sometimes searing . . . and captivating the audience with a theatrical sense of timing" (Kranish and Fisher 2016, 217).

Trump's public relations team and image consultants also saw *The Apprentice* as a means of presenting a more "authentic, nuanced person than the glitz-obsessed, ego-first character Americans knew from tabloid headlines and TV cameos." NBC public relations chief Jim Dowd witnessed his rise in popularity after the premiere: "People on the street embraced him. He was mobbed. . . . He was a hero and he had not been one before. He told me, 'I've got the real estate and hotel and golf niche, I've got the name recognition, but I don't have the love and respect of Middle America.' Now he did. That was the bridge to the [2016] campaign." Trump, like Simon Cowell on *American Idol*, changed the rule book for reality shows that television should be "positive and inspiring, not negative," proving instead that audiences would respond positively to

people willing to be “simultaneously inspiring and negative—a politically incorrect truth teller.” In this way, *The Apprentice* transformed Trump from a “blowhard Richie Rich who had just gone through his most difficult decade into an unlikely symbol of straight talk, an evangelist for the American gospel of success, a decider who insisted on standards in a country that had somehow slipped into handing out trophies for just showing up” (Kranish and Fisher 2016, 217–18).

How did Donald Trump win the Republican nomination and the presidency? Volumes will certainly be written about this surprising outcome. Textbooks on campaigns and elections suggest that candidates who have political and financial support and necessary background are “quality challengers,” while those who have no political experience are unlikely to win (L. M. Brown 2011; Sides et al. 2015). There is a presumption in the literature that a minimum level of appropriate experience is necessary, although not sufficient, for victory. On the other hand, much of American history has favored governors who paint themselves as Washington outsiders and therefore as favorites to become president, even though they lacked experience at the federal level, particularly in foreign policy (Ambar 2012). Indeed, Jonathan Rauch (2015) has argued that “no one gets elected president who needs longer than 14 years to get from his or her first gubernatorial or Senate victory to . . . the presidency,” and years of experience is decreasingly correlated to success in presidential elections. This book’s purpose is not to offer a detailed analysis on the various factors that lead to electoral success. The picture is complex: incumbency, issue salience, voters’ feelings about candidates, ideological orientation, economic performance, popularity of a president or various incumbents, and many other factors are often cited as variables that affect the outcomes of presidential elections.

Still, did Trump’s celebrity—and the skills he developed as an entertainer—help him win the election? Perhaps day after day and week after week of burnishing his image and building a para-social relationship with his viewers gave him many of the skills and experiences necessary to win the presidency. Perhaps these years of weekly visits into people’s living rooms had an effect on his audience. Those who watched the show regularly likely had more exposure to Trump than to the president of the United States or any other politician of the time. Does it make a difference? “Celebrities are involved in certain issues,” said one respondent in a post-survey interview.

“If I know that celebrity, it already gave me a certain familiarity. However, depending on the issue and how much I know about the celebrity, that helped me determine whether they were credible or not.”

Of course, this book is less about understanding election outcomes and more about how celebrities influence their target audiences in order to draw attention to issues and to change people’s minds. However, Trump’s story is relevant. Trump may be president now, but for a long time he was an entertainer. Indeed, this case study illustrates how an entertainer carefully builds and utilizes skills that are often not endemic to the average politician, and how the entertainment industry provides media platforms for celebrities to exercise their influence over others.

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how those in the media and entertainment industry and the skills developed by entertainment celebrities combine to provide the venues and tools for celebrity influence. The first section will differentiate celebrities from other types of political actors and detail the ways that celebrities have emerged as powerful cultural figures who are taken as seriously as traditional politicians. The second section will conceptualize and compare political and celebrity power. The third section will focus on agenda setting, explaining how celebrities act as policy entrepreneurs in order to advance their causes. The final section will explain how this book intends to evaluate celebrities’ potential to influence the political process.

THE CONCERNED CELEBRITY

Coverage of celebrity activists on websites, newscasts, and newspapers has increased substantially since the 1940s, when celebrities such as Frank Sinatra endorsed Franklin D. Roosevelt for president. Observers at the Democratic Action Committee luncheon in New York and the Republican opponents who criticized the president’s affiliation with a “mere crooner” would not have been able to imagine a world where reality television star Kim Kardashian announced, “Let’s get this trending!” With a few taps on the buttons of her cell phone, she tweeted a hashtag to over 14 million followers, causing “#ArmenianGenocide” to become one of the most searched for terms on Google in hours (Kendzior 2012; Wheeler 2013, 44–45). While multiple factors have led to the increased prominence and

perceived importance of celebrity in modern society, for simplicity, these factors can be categorized into two trends (Marshall 1997, 25–26; Stohl, Stohl, and Stohl 2011; West and Orman 2003, 2–8; Wheeler 2013, 44). First, technology has both empowered and exploited audiences. Media organizations, mindful of competition and profits, have utilized celebrities to meet a market demand. Second, some celebrities have become autonomous from their business benefactors, allowing them a greater opportunity to express themselves politically. The following sections will address each of these trends.

Technology, Media, and the Audience

Most would argue that the accuracy and quality of media reporting has improved over the past century. Scholars have debated the relative merits of a free and private media, particularly whether they are "enabling" or "disabling" to modern democracy.[1] Those who believe that the media are "enabling" argue that reporters present diverse views and a necessary scrutiny or "watchdog" function to hold the politically powerful in check. Those who are more skeptical argue that media and entertainment organizations remain, first and foremost, businesses. The business side of the media also makes them potentially "disabling" to democracy when the pursuit of the "bottom line" puts media organizations at odds with honest, in-depth reporting for the purpose of serving the populace. Dominant discourses replace diverse views. Sound bites replace complex policy statements. Sensationalist coverage replaces thoughtful discussion of issues.

Over time, technology has increased the prominence of the business side of media, whether the net effect is enabling or disabling. It has accelerated speed of delivery and enhanced entertainment value so that people can consume entertainment or news on demand at any time of day or night through multiple delivery mechanisms, observing some of the highest-quality writing, photos, video, and audio that cater to an audience's personal preferences. These audiences have grown in power since the emergence of consumer capitalism. An audience in a capitalist economy and democratic society has purchasing power, makes political decisions, includes people of varying power capacities, and involves both observer and participant in an interactive process. An audience's social power is evident in the way that media companies and political organizations alike attempt to learn more

about their audiences. They target messages, programs, and advertising to the appropriate consumer, ironically persuading members of demographic groups of their individuality in order to sell massive quantities of identical products (Adorno 2002; Fenster and Swiss 1999, 226; Marshall 1997, 63–64). Social media has further facilitated this process, as advertisers have more easily captured private data to target the most relevant entertainment and products to select consumers.

The entertainment industry responds to consumer and media demand by manufacturing and marketing art and entertainment as if they were automobiles or bars of soap.[2] Celebrities are part of a larger business machine that serves to publicize and promote their images and their projects. Politicians have followed the same trend, particularly since the emergence of television as a dominant medium (Street 2004). By 1960, John F. Kennedy's image mattered as much as his policy positions, particularly in his presidential debate versus Richard Nixon. The accompanying fame associated with this "commodification of the individual" means that celebrities and politicians alike become highly visible and immediately recognizable products. Daniel Boorstin referred to this as the "age of contrivance" where public officials and celebrities (who are "pseudo-people") participate in scripted, counterfeit versions of real events ("pseudo-events") to depict and construct public images that may be alternative, phony, or false representations of reality (Boorstin 1992). The news media willingly convert these events and people into easily digestible tabloid "infotainment," presenting "complex issues . . . in terms of human experience" and utilizing "images, especially emotional ones . . . to illustrate news events" (Epstein 1973, 262–63). In this way, politicians and celebrities alike enter into a symbiotic relationship with the media where public figures build consumer loyalty and peddle their goods (public policies, music, film, personalities) while media outlets benefit from the attention that these figures attract, which translates to advertisement revenue (G. Turner 2004).

Two factors have driven media organizations toward adopting similar business models and presentation styles, both of which have increased the presence of celebrities in news coverage. The first factor is safety. In order to protect and increase market share, newsrooms establish standard operating procedures to protect budgets and advertising revenue and to prevent intervention from network executives (Epstein 1973, 259). Some of

these procedures focus on presenting content in a way that appeals most to consumers and are unlikely to alienate advertisers. News stories are safely packaged with clear beginnings, middles, and ends and are selected based on their potential for displaying high levels of action, conflict, or novelty (Bennett 2012; Cook 2005, 2–3, 104; Epstein 1973, 262–63). Stories are sensationalized to increase attention and circulation by either heightening the importance of trivial issues that are not of public importance or trivializing issues of public importance by oversimplification in a tabloid format (Bennett 2012; Stephens 2007; Thompson 1999). They are then framed in terms that appeal to the political orientation of their target demographics (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010). As a result, news organizations present politicians in simple terms, engaging in constant, extreme conflict with each other. Celebrity interviews on their latest project offer a break from serious news, and those celebrities who advocate political issues are entertaining and novel.

The second factor is the pressure for media organizations to respond to the demands of a twenty-four-hour news cycle. This pressure for more content has led journalists to become more reliant upon public officials to give them information that they can deliver to the public without much effort or critique (Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2008, 3; Cook 2005, 102–3). It has also forced journalists to "figure out how to make journalistic silk purses out of the sow's ears that officials occasionally give them" (Cook 2005, 102). Sometimes, in an effort to fill space, reporters have presented "reality" and celebrity stories as if they were as significant as political news (Bennett 2012; Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2008). Moreover, relationships between media correspondents, photographers, and celebrities have been described as "incestuous" (Gould 2007). Media organizations need stories, and celebrities need to burnish their images. Likewise, since celebrities are not public officials, starstruck correspondents of the so-called fourth estate do not cross-examine celebrities in the same way that they would politicians. While a judicious professional distance might be maintained between a reporter and a senator, the same might not be said for the same reporter and an actor. For example, few would question the friendship between Angelina Jolie and Ann Curry of NBC News. Organizations such as Gawker and Rupert Murdoch's *News of the World*, which specialized in revealing the unpolished side of celebrities' lives,

faced legal challenges for invading the privacy of celebrities and have been subsequently shut down.

One final issue both feeds and undermines these factors: the emergence and power of social media. As mentioned above, social media is a source for data mining, which serves the needs of corporate advertisers who financially support the traditional media establishment. However, social media is also a prime medium for communication and content. Users not only read and watch thousands of snippets of videos and news stories. They also manufacture them. Anyone with an internet connection can write a blog, make a video, tweet a link, or live cast events. The Arab Spring of 2010 was brought to the world by Facebook. Protests and acts of police violence have been live cast from cell phones. Even the president of the United States cannot stop tweeting.

On the one hand, this technology feeds the establishment media. The hungry news cycle demands content, and in the absence of something more exciting, amateur bloggers and videographers offer seemingly unlimited free content. Even reporters have sourced nonexperts and noncelebrities through citizen-generated content. Now media organizations have their own unpaid reporters, content generators, and opinion makers. Even celebrities and politicians take to social media, which makes it easier for media organizations to access their thoughts and images.

On the other hand, this technology also undermines traditional media organizations. First, there is an inherent quality problem in relying upon content from amateur sources. “Facts” derived from Twitter and other social media have often been treated uncritically, which has led to poor reporting from otherwise reputable newspaper, radio, television, and online news outlets (Dewey and Ohlheiser 2016; Folkenfiik 2012; Guthrie 2013; Lutz and Rogers 2012; O’Neal 2013; Rieder 2013; Wigley and Fontenot 2011). Partisan media sources publish stories that often contain “alternative facts,” as Trump counselor Kellyanne Conway has touted. Bloggers and commentators peddle “fake news,” ignoring inconvenient truths in an effort to cater to their partisan audiences. As long as it is easy and cheap to construct a website, anyone can call themselves a news source. Even foreign governments and rogue actors can publish misinformation disguised as news. This “truthiness . . . something that seems like truth—the truth we want to exist,” to use comedian Stephen Colbert’s term, poses a challenge to professional standards of journalistic review (Sternbergh 2006).

Second, social media such as Facebook and Twitter are, to some extent, supplanting traditional media outlets. Media organizations have traditionally been the gatekeepers for news and for celebrities to get their information to consumers. Media outlets benefit from the attention generated by celebrities. Celebrities benefit from the vehicle to advance their interests. However, now celebrities can speak more directly to their audiences and circumvent traditional media (Gunter 2014, 3). Thus Justin Bieber had the means to become a celebrity by virtue of some accomplished YouTube performances, which caused him to go "viral" and then become an established celebrity (Gunter 2014, 9). Others achieved online fame through devoted fan bases with similar interests as micro-celebrities, and they would not be generally recognized outside of their niche community (Marwick 2013). However, even an established celebrity like Donald Trump, who nourished his celebrity through regular feeds to tabloids, publicity stunts, and ultimately a reality show, still as president attempts to circumvent the media completely by communicating with his followers directly on Twitter. Trump's efforts to criticize and sideline the media are likely an effort to increase his ability to communicate with his audience directly. In an age of internet-generated fake news, where consumers are uncertain about the veracity of their information and partisans are more likely to trust sources they like and who already agree with them, Trump's words seem as genuine as anyone else's.

In short, changes in the technological landscape have resulted in an environment where media organizations need to satisfy insatiable audiences and provide oversimplified entertaining content that is increasingly specialized to their wants and needs. Establishment media and consumer-driven content have addressed those needs. However, this democratization of the media and "dumbing down of the news" may have led people to question the quality of their news sources (Graham, McNeil, and Pettiford 2014, 116). This growth and transformation of the media has risen in tandem with a decline in public trust of governmental institutions and politicians. These factors have led to the increased exposure of celebrities in the media, a greater attention to their political activities, and perhaps a heightened trust in celebrities as public spokespeople.

Celebrity Autonomy

The process of turning people into celebrity commodities makes them famous and gives them more media access, but it does not necessarily make them political. The news media do not need entertainers to have opinions on political issues. Reporters can manufacture news by reporting on nearly anything. When reporting on celebrities, they could simply feature stories of entertainers talking about entertainment. Celebrity advocacy requires a conscious decision by the celebrity, which consists of the individual desire and freedom to "get involved." Desire and freedom do not come easily or naturally.

Just like other citizens, many celebrities who have the freedom to get involved in political advocacy do not have the desire to do so, or they have mixed motives. Some seek out causes in the same way they seek out product endorsements. They look for causes that match their image and avoid controversy, and they believe that certain types of political involvement will enhance their images as "all-around" individuals who do more than feed mundane promotions of their latest projects to a hungry media (Becker 2010, 95–96; Duvall 2010; Meyer and Gamson 1995; Tsaliki, Frangonikolopoulos, and Huliaras 2011, 9). Or in Trump's case, activism may have been a means to an end. Indeed, many have argued that Donald Trump's "birther" activism was a good fit. It provided an opportunity for him to establish a base for an eventual presidential campaign—an attempt to raise his own profile by exploiting a wedge between Barack Obama and those who questioned the legitimacy of the nation's first black president (Parker and Eder 2016). Media organizations willingly covered the controversy.

On the other hand, as summarized in chapter 1, many celebrities who have the desire to express themselves may not have the freedom to do so, since contractual obligations limit their behavior. However, changes in the entertainment industry have given celebrities a greater degree of autonomy, which has led to an increase in celebrity advocacy (Wertheim 2008; Williamson 2011; Zirin 2009). Two factors have led to this autonomy: money and an emergent authenticity norm.

First, celebrities who are more financially successful are likely to have greater autonomy. The Beatles in the 1960s, for example, had latitude to express themselves more flexibly because they were an industry "cash cow" and were able to stipulate some of their own contractual terms. From the Beatles' earliest American tours they put out a press statement as part of

their performance policy directed at segregationists: “We will not appear unless Negroes are allowed to sit anywhere” (Miles 2009). John Lennon said, “We never play to segregated audiences and we aren’t going to start now. I’d sooner lose our appearance money” (Cornish 2011). Subsequent statements about civil rights and religion led to Beatles boycotts and record burnings in southern American states. Ultimately, the Beatles were able to direct attention to this issue and demand changes to policies based on their popularity and commercial influence. Political involvement is potentially a commercial risk for entertainers, but wealth may reduce that risk. In this case, it may not have been enough for the Beatles to simply have a conscience about civil rights and a desire to express themselves. They may have personally been willing to take financial losses for their causes. They had to be indispensable enough to the industry to change their standard operating procedures or independent enough to create their own.

Second, emancipation from morals clauses and changes in public attitudes in the 1960s transformed the marketable image of modern musicians and increased their level of autonomy. Unlike actors, whose business is to play someone other than themselves, rock and folk musicians, such as the Beatles and Bob Dylan, were increasingly marketed as genuine artists who wrote and produced their own music (Harvey 2016b, 2016a). In this way, musicians could maintain exclusive contracts with record companies but maintain a freedom of autonomous political expression. These changes pressured many musicians to meet an “authenticity norm,” which pigeonholed some musicians as superficial and others as deep and artistic. Those who fell into the latter category, such as rock musicians, were less likely to be commercially “punished” for sharing their opinion, because political expression fit into their constructed image of authenticity.[3] Indeed, audiences may punish “inauthentic” celebrities. If an authenticity norm suggests that a certain type of celebrity should be acting in ways consistent with a norm—such as acting morally and expressing himself in good conscience—those who seem to put money and self-interest over conscience may be questioned as hypocritical. For example, some pundits have criticized Bono for appealing on behalf of citizens of impoverished countries and criticizing the Irish government’s spending policies, while simultaneously offshoring some of U2’s assets in order to avoid paying taxes in Ireland (Erb 2013). Many pop or hip-hop artists who have never taken a political stand would, likewise, never be accused of hypocrisy.

However, the authenticity norm does not extend to all celebrities or even all genres of music. Indeed, circumstances, issues, and even a celebrity's target demographic can conspire to undermine the credibility of the celebrity and the effectiveness of the message. For example, when Tim Robbins, principal actor in the popular baseball movie *Bull Durham*, spoke out against the Iraq war in 2003, the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame canceled the celebration of that film's fifteenth anniversary (Hernández 2003; Rosenbaum 2003; *Sports Illustrated* 2003).[4] Likewise, contemporary country audiences may be less tolerant of country music artists taking on political positions that are not apolitical or conservative, as evidenced by the Dixie Chicks' unintentional political firestorm with their fifteen famous words on a British stage, "Just so you know, we're ashamed the President of the United States is from Texas." The comment undermined their commercial viability as radio stations pulled their songs from playlists and fans staged CD smashing parties. Ironically, this normative change has represented a reversal in country music. Country music fans from previous generations either tolerated or appreciated much more liberal messages as performers sang about the plight of the working class (Brost 2013; Firestein 2005; Rudder 2005, 208; Scholten 2007; Van Sickel 2005; Willman 2007).

As summarized in chapter 1, celebrities have become more autonomous over the period of the twentieth century. This increased autonomy has been driven by greater financial and contractual independence and changing norms and expectations of what the "authentic" performer's role is in society. Still, the very factors that have enabled some celebrities to express themselves politically also continue to limit those celebrities who lack those resources and norms.

QUALIFYING CELEBRITY POWER

Celebrities have much in common with politicians. They have similar relationships with the media and have public personas that are akin to brand recognition for a product. However, one key difference between them is that politicians hold public office and formal reins of power while celebrities generally do not. Thus, celebrities are more like activists than like politicians. They are outsiders trying to pressure the system to attain specific ends. To understand not only the power potential for celebrities but

also their differences from politicians, table 2.1 summarizes a "bases of power" typology, which provides a means to compare types of power across those who hold formal institutional power and those who do not.

This typology, borrowed from social psychology and organizational behavior, is well suited for comparing politicians' and celebrities' powers. Unlike definitions of power that privilege those who hold public office or possess vast material resources or else privilege the power of celebrities by emphasizing the importance of soft power, French and Raven's framework allows for the categorization of a diversity of power types. Considering that celebrities do not typically hold public office and possess varying degrees of material resources, opening the discussion to additional forms of power means that celebrities and politicians can be compared along measures that may be more appropriate in a media environment where they compete for valuable face time in video, print, and social media.

Table 2.1 French and Raven's Power Typology

Types of power	Characteristics
Legitimate	Based on the subject's perception that the influencing agent has the legitimate right to indicate his behavior and that this indication should be complied with.
Expert	Based on the subject's perception that the influencing agent has knowledge and expertise in a certain area.
Reward	Based on the subject's perception of the influencing agent's ability to reward him for the desired behavior.
Coercive	Based on the subject's perception of the influencing agent's ability to apply punishments.
Informational	Based on the influencing agent's presentation of information and logical arguments.
Referent	Based on the subject's identification with the influencing agent, seeking to behave like him.

Sources: Costa and Martins 2011; French and Raven 1959; Raven 1993.

Legitimacy Power

Elections and appointments to public office provide political legitimacy. Legitimacy is based on "the subject's perception that the influencing agent has the legitimate right" to act according to the dictates of his/her position and utilize any associated resources in its exercise (French and Raven 1959). Moreover, subjects are generally bound to be compliant with

legitimate authorities. If the president issues an executive order, the bureaucracy puts the order into action. An act of Congress will be codified into law. Judges' orders will be followed or penalties will be paid. Citizens will pay parking tickets and speeding tickets. Employees will obey employers. A respect for the rule of law or some system of incentives and punishments often reinforces the legitimacy of systems of authority. However, legitimacy and authority are independent of reward and coercive power. Psychological studies over generations have indicated that even unfamiliar authority figures will command respect and compliance with practically no material incentives (Haslam, Loughnan, and Perry 2014; Milgram 2009).

By definition, elected officials hold public legitimacy, while celebrities do not. Celebrities who lead organizations may have legitimacy within their institution, but by definition they lack legitimate power or authority to control the levers of public power. Of course, some celebrities become public officials, as indicated in chapter 1. However, once a celebrity is elected, their position in public office becomes their primary vocation, at least for a time. Unless celebrities attain legitimate power, their powers are akin to those of activists.

There are two primary differences between celebrity activists and ordinary activists. The most obvious is that their fame sets them apart from typical activists. According to Jamie Drummond, global strategist for the Jubilee 2000 "Drop the Debt" campaign and the man who recruited Bono to the cause, "Bono got meetings with people that we couldn't meet with. If you're looking for the X factor, it is that we managed to win over the attention of the media, which usually ignore a cause like this. And that was through Bono" (Stockman 2005, 152). Huddart (2005) calls celebrities "symbolic heroes" in activism: people who have the status and utilize most of the same tactics as other activists, but by nature of their stature can amplify a social cause.

Second, celebrities are, in the words of Francesco Alberoni (2007), "politically irresponsible" and unaccountable. Their lack of legitimate authority gives them the ability to speak and act freely, which sometimes leads to respect and sometimes to ridicule. A conscientious celebrity who is disconnected from a social movement may make a statement that draws attention to an issue, causing activists to acknowledge the statement in an effort to raise their own profile. Alternatively, advocacy organizations may

recruit celebrities in an effort to spotlight their cause, which raises the profile of the organization and has the potential to bind the celebrity to the group as they might be bound to a product in a commercial realm. However, celebrity endorsements for organizations and causes can backfire, just as they can for products. Celebrities sometimes lose interest, experience personal problems on the front pages of tabloids, or fail to stay on message. Celebrity prestige may be "tarnished by waning success" (Lindenberg, Joly, and Stapel 2011). A celebrity behaving badly may hurt his or her own reputation and perhaps reflect badly upon those affiliated products, sponsors, and causes. Sponsors and employers may be able to rein in a celebrity by threatening to cut ties. A social movement rarely has that kind of power. If celebrity behavior reflects badly on political causes, social movements can pay a high price. Thus, when celebrity activists fail, their failures are potentially more public and consequential than those of ordinary activists (Rosamond 2011; Stohl, Stohl, and Stohl 2011; de Waal 2008; Wheeler 2011).

For example, Bob Dylan had been performing at rallies organized by Martin Luther King Jr. in the early 1960s, even performing "Blowin' in the Wind" at the March on Washington in 1963. In December of that year, one month after the assassination of President Kennedy, the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee honored Dylan with a civil rights award for his songs that raised the profile of the plight of African Americans. During his acceptance speech at their annual banquet, a drunken Dylan talked about how he "saw a lot of himself" in Lee Harvey Oswald. The crowd booed him out of the room (Crosby and Bender 2000, 12; Dylan 1963).

Thus, celebrities are not legitimately powerful and are technically more like activists. The following sections focus on the forms of power that are generally available to celebrities and politicians in varying degrees.

Expertise and Credibility Power

Credibility relates to an individual's perceived trust or believability, and expertise refers to a skill or knowledge in a particular field. These qualities in an individual rely upon the image of that individual in the minds of others (Andersen and Clevenger 1963). It is a key form of communication and persuasion, and it relies upon not only the perceived qualities of the

sender but also the attitudes and attributes of the receiver. It can affect selection of opinion leaders, political candidates, and voter behavior (Hellweg 2004; Teven 2008).

Considering the qualities of the sender—in this case, the politician rendering a message—credibility and expertise can be grounded in a politician's past record in other positions and performance in his/her current office. It might be grounded in one's ability to get elected to public office or to gain and maintain the formal reins of power. Politicians' expertise may begin in formal education but is more firmly established through professional experiences. A congressperson's expertise may be grounded in committee appointments. A chief executive might have experience in foreign policy or in negotiating between legislators with diverse interests. Like an applicant building a resume for a job, politicians amass positions and experiences that are framed as being relevant to the job of policymaking. Normally a public official enters and holds public office with a degree of expertise and credibility. Expertise may not be lost in an absolute sense, but credibility can be eroded if public officials are marred by scandals or policy failures. However, credibility is also in the eyes of the beholder, that is, the target audience. Public officials are only as credible as people think they are. Some constituents and politicians will never accept certain public officials because of differences of opinion over policy or ideological and psychological divides. Therefore, expertise itself is not sufficient to maintain the credibility of a politician.

Celebrities' resumes usually look nothing like those of politicians. Therefore, one would presume that celebrities would lack the expertise and credibility necessary for advocating policy positions. As indicated above, this factor differentiates celebrities from public officials, making them more like citizens and less like politicians. Certainly, celebrities are credible and expert at their professions. People may think that Mariah Carey is a good singer who does good things for the Fresh Air Fund, but few would assume that she is an expert on environmental issues or equipped to be a policymaker. Likewise, Angelina Jolie, George Clooney, and Bono are not professors, professional lobbyists, or policymakers. Celebrities will generally be perceived based on their abilities—as musicians, actors, or athletes. Like politicians, they can lose credibility because of scandal or a poor performance. In addition, celebrities will never be universally loved. Some people, for innumerable reasons, may never like a particular celebrity.

Must celebrities gain expertise in order to become credible? When it comes to selling a product, the advertising literature suggests that it is not essential but highly desirable. Perceived expertise of celebrities is the only source factor that has a significant impact on intent to purchase. Those who have perceived expertise are thought of as more attractive and better liked than those who do not, and credible sources tend to be more persuasive (Buhr, Simpson, and Pryor 1987; Horai, Naccari, and Fatoullah 1974; Hovland, Janis, and Kelley 1953; Lammie 2007; Maddux and Rogers 1980; Ohanian 1991; Speck, Schumann, and Thompson 1988). Celebrities are often not seen as expert, credible, believable, or effective (Atkin and Block 1983; Freiden 1984), although some scholars have suggested that celebrities are more persuasive than "experts" (Becker 2010, 116).

To offset these perceptions, some celebrities attempt to compensate for their lack of expertise. Ben Affleck, who testified in the House of Representatives and the Senate on the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, argues: "I knew I wouldn't be a credible advocate if I wasn't taken seriously, if I hadn't done my homework. And so, you know, in order to do it, you had to do it properly. . . . There definitely [is] a sense of resentment towards actors, and the idea is, well, you're not an expert, and that's true. . . . I never pretended to be a technocrat or a wonk or certainly, you know, an expert, a special envoy" (Greene 2014).

To compensate "properly" for a lack of expertise, celebrities do two kinds of "homework." The first is the establishment of experiential expertise. Celebrities can enhance their credibility by gaining expertise that is relevant to the policy area, just as politicians do. They must either "bridge the gap" that separates their level of expertise from politicians or offer policymakers a source of expertise that they might not be able to gain otherwise. George Clooney, for example, sneaked into some of the worst, war-torn areas of Sudan to witness the plight of refugees living in caves (Straziuso 2012). Days later, he testified before Congress about his experience. Because of his resources, he was able to fund and execute the trip. Because of his high profile, he was able to draw attention from national leaders. Nevertheless, it was his expertise on this focused event—the fact that he was able to see things on the ground that no others could have recently seen—that made his content worth hearing. A series of experiences like these gives Clooney an accumulated expertise, which improves his credibility. Whether it is Bono touring Africa and El Salvador, or Angelina Jolie visiting refugee camps in

regions throughout the world, many celebrities place themselves on the ground, often among victims, in an effort to communicate to observers that they know and understand something that the average citizen or legislator does not.

People respond positively to these efforts. Respondents were asked about whether celebrities could be "credible" and "what makes them credible?" The following quotes reinforce the notion that homework and experience matter to their perceived credibility:

> "They have done their research and have a full understanding of both sides of the issue."
>
> "I do believe that some celebrities are more credible on serious policy issues because hopefully they have taken time to do some research before they put their opinion out to thousands of people. Since celebrities are aware of their influence on people, I can only hope they take time to gather facts on their issue they are supporting."
>
> "They do events that give them experience."

A second kind of homework is establishing a connection with transnational advocacy networks (Antrobus and Sen 2006; Batliwala and Brown 2006; Garwood 2005; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 2002; Mekata 2006; Rodrigues 2004; Shaw 2005). Affiliated activists and connected organizations voluntarily take action to transform political environments locally and internationally, by mobilizing information and deploying sophisticated strategies. They involve activists, local social movements, professionals, scientists, foundations, the media, churches, economic actors such as trade unions and firms, consumer organizations, research and advocacy NGOs, and intellectuals (Clark 2006, 133; Keck and Sikkink 1998, xi, 1; Naidoo 2006, 54).

A celebrity that allies with a network gains access to dozens of organizations, thousands of activists, a multitude of experts, and additional resources. For example, when Bono first became involved in debt relief with the Jubilee 2000 campaign, he contacted Kennedy family activist Bobby Shriver, who suggested that Bono "go back to school" before lobbying Congress. Shriver connected him to World Bank head James Wolfensohn, former Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volker, and David Rockefeller to discuss the issue. He then studied under Jeffrey Sachs at

Harvard (N. D. Jackson 2008, 70). When he lobbied Congress, Bono's arguments may have independently persuaded legislators to forgive the debt of developing countries (Busby 2007). However, Bono gained credibility as he was flanked by experts and connected politicos such as Sachs and Shriver and backed by an advocacy network. Bono became the articulate mouthpiece of a coordinated lobby. Thus, even those citizens or politicians who may question whether the experience of a celebrity translates to expertise and credibility may be reassured by the institution and expert individuals who support the celebrity.

Reward/Coercion Power

With public office comes the means to reward and punish, which can be expressed in a multitude of complex ways. Public officials lavish money on states and districts to reward those who supported them in their efforts to gain office. They make laws to encourage and limit the behavior of citizens across a country. They even hold a monopoly on violence, where citizens who break certain laws can be put to death, or citizens from other countries can be killed for the actions of foreign governments (Weber 2004). Of course, the power of any given official rests upon those who tolerate or actively support them. In addition, public officials do not have a monopoly on all forms of reward and punishment. Two categories of tactics that allow activists and politicians alike to reward and punish target actors include leverage politics and accountability politics.

With "leverage politics," individuals attempt to secure commitments from leaders and institutions on policies by linking an issue to use of money, goods, votes in international organizations, powerful allies, prestigious offices, or other benefits (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 16, 24–29, 35, 206; Rodrigues 2004; Shaw 2005). Legislators may threaten their peers to vote for a bill or else face a lack of support in an upcoming election. Likewise, they may offer committee appointments, connections to donors, or cooperation on other legislation in order to gain support for their bill. On the other hand, nonpoliticians have the ability to reward and coerce in other ways. Interest groups and activists can financially reward or punish politicians for their stances on certain causes, and lobbying can reap significant benefits (Alexander, Mazza, and Scholz 2009; Cigler, Loomis,

and Nownes 2015). Constituents can vote politicians in or out of office based upon their performance.

"Accountability politics" is where activists attempt to get officials to take public positions on issues and "hold powerful actors to their words, policies or principles" (Batliwala and Brown 2006; Keck and Sikkink 1998, 19–27). Politicians often try to secure public statements from each other so that they can hold them accountable to their promises in public discourse, particularly around election time. However, activists engage in the same sorts of efforts, and they reward and punish politicians for sticking to or changing their positions in ways consistent with the interests of the advocacy group. Perhaps "talk is cheap," but not if activist networks can pressure target actors to act according to their stated intentions. In this case, they pressure a target politician into doing what they promised to do. To achieve these goals, activists may get financial institutions to link money to salient issues as a source of pressure. By mobilizing the masses, they may affect public opinion through the media and then pressure policymakers. If target actors are vulnerable or sensitive to their organization or state's reputation among the "good opinion" of others as described in the previous section, activists may exert "moral leverage" against them as well by "shaming" them for bad policies and practices (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 23–24).

As entertainment celebrities have grown more wealthy, they have not only increased their ability to manipulate their image more effectively, but also to exert leverage by contributing money to organizations and campaigns and demanding a greater role in their promotion. The ability to give money or threaten to deny it could make celebrities as potentially powerful as individuals of similar wealth (Marshall 1997; West and Orman 2003, 19). While this coercive and reward power may not rival the legitimate power of public officials in wealthy democratic states or even the concentrated wealth of multinational corporations and the richest people in the world, it may buy influence. Jon Stewart once famously quipped in his commentary on George Clooney's star-studded Hollywood fund-raiser, "The most powerful man in the free world [is] having Barack Obama over to his house" (Stewart 2012).

Social media can also be used to coerce. Citizens may flood legislators with angry tweets. Sometimes these tweets can be threatening. Moreover, famous people with thousands or millions of followers can amplify this

effect. Before he became president, Donald Trump, for example, famously unleashed his “beautiful Twitter account” on Megyn Kelly of Fox News after she asked him some tough questions during a presidential debate. Because of his millions of devoted followers, Kelly received thousands of tweets threatening her with verbal and physical abuse, rape, and stalking (Blake 2016; Gross 2016).

Another factor is spotlighting. High-profile celebrities, because of their ability to command attention, may be more effective at pressuring public officials or holding them accountable to their promises. While the literature offers little hard research on this hypothesis, there are anecdotal examples that support this possibility. For example, while lobbying for debt relief and AIDS funding with the Jubilee 2000 campaign, Bono played a role in shaming U.S. senators and representatives in their own districts during campaigns and subsequently received both attention and commitment from these players (N. D. Jackson 2008, 151–52). Likewise, “Little” Steven Van Zandt of Bruce Springsteen’s E Street Band formed Artists United Against Apartheid to shame governments who did not go through with promises to sanction South Africa. The primary vehicle was a song and music video in which dozens of popular musicians appeared. Van Zandt not only shamed world leaders for failing to sanction South Africa but also shamed many of his fellow musicians who evaded a United Nations sanctioned cultural boycott by playing at the Sun City Casino and Resort (Hawkins 2011; Young 2013).

Both Bono and Van Zandt got what they wanted. However, both also worked through transnational advocacy networks to attain their ends, so it is difficult to assign credit to the celebrity intervention alone. To prove that celebrities have the power to shame or praise political actors effectively, one first has to prove that celebrities are capable of attracting sufficient media attention on a political issue and that they are persuasive enough to be threatening. Otherwise, both efforts may have been acts of conscience that ended well enough. If it can be demonstrated that celebrities are indeed capable of these skills, it is quite possible that celebrities’ coercive and reward powers go beyond distributing or denying money. They may include the ability to make life difficult for public officials by inspiring audiences to validate or question their credibility.

Informational Power

Informational power is based on the influencing agent's presentation of information and logical arguments, the ability of an individual to utilize and control information (French and Raven 1959; Raven 1993). "Information politics" is the "ability to quickly and credibly generate politically usable information and move it to where it will have the most impact" (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 16). On a basic level, information politics refers to the mechanisms used to distribute information. Public officials hold informational power because elected offices come with a built-in institutionalized communications network, designed to achieve this end as efficiently as possible. Websites, emails, texts, and phone calls; town hall meetings and public speeches; campaign commercials and issue advertisements; posters and pamphlets; interviews and sound bites—public offices are built not only to distribute information efficiently through these various outlets but also to devise strategic messages. Likewise, media organizations will usually go to public officials first for information on issues of public concern.

Activists are at a relative disadvantage compared with politicians, but they can build their own networks to distribute and control information. They make use of social media, websites, and e-mail in order to organize and communicate their messages. They stage events, give speeches, write editorials, make endorsements, and perform interviews. Activists also strategically frame stories and testimonies that appeal to shared principles, utilize language for maximum persuasive impact, explain problems, blame responsible parties, and attempt to set agendas.[5] These strategies not only inform target audiences but also set public discourse with the intention of changing language, changing minds, and even uniting diverse actors behind a common cause. This section on informational power will focus on three aspects of informational politics: spotlighting, persuasion, and symbolic politics.

Spotlighting. As suggested above, politicians may naturally direct public attention toward a particular policy issue, because constituents and media sources may turn to them first when seeking information, and politicians have the means to amplify their messages more easily than typical activists can. Celebrities are like politicians in their ability to command attention.

Networks and institutions support celebrities' content, although that content typically is inclined toward entertainment rather than public policymaking. However, this ability to command attention can be turned toward particular causes. "We have a spotlight on us," Bono argues. "I'm just doing what everyone else would do if they had the time and the money. U2 fans have given me a great life, and I'm a spoiled-rotten rock star. . . . In return, there's a deal. One, don't bend over, and two, use this spotlight to shine on bigger problems" (Richardson 2002).

It is easy to forget, given Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legendary historical status, that when he was first organizing, protesting, and inspiring people to engage in acts of civil disobedience, he relied upon armies of activists and enlisted anyone he could to gain attention for his cause, including celebrities. Harry Belafonte explains that King was inspirational and a good organizer. "All they needed was somebody to say, 'Where do we go?' They just needed someone to point, and since I'm always pointing anyway, Dr. King made me the pointer" (Crosby and Bender 2000, 14). A search for articles from the 1950s referencing Harry Belafonte and Martin Luther King Jr. yielded editorials where the writer presumes that the reader knows about Belafonte but is unaware of King. King and his other strategists believed that appearances with Belafonte such as the 1956 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom and the 1957 Youth March for Integration would raise the profile of the movement. King also traveled and worked with musicians such as Pete Seeger, Mahalia Jackson, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and Peter, Paul, and Mary. These musicians, carrying the messages in music such as "We Shall Overcome" and "Blowin' in the Wind," faced the same hostile crowds as King and his fellow protesters did. Ultimately, the famous 1963 March on Washington where King shared his now famous "dream" prominently featured the support of dozens of celebrities.

However, some politically active celebrities not only advance a particular issue but also provide the infrastructure to connect activists across a multitude of issues. For example, Serj Tankian of the rock band System of a Down has used his celebrity to raise consciousness about the Armenian Genocide of 1915. He and Tom Morello of the band Rage Against the Machine founded Axis of Justice to "bring together musicians, fans of music, and grassroots political organizations to fight for social justice" and to "build a bridge between fans of music around the world and local political organizations to effectively organize around issues of peace,

human rights, and economic justice" (Fighting for Social Justice n.d.; Serj Tankian n.d.). They use their celebrity names to host a website that acts as a communication link to connect organizations with common causes. Rather than seeking out interviews on network news, they pursue a grassroots model focused on organizing and lobbying.

Paul Watson, cofounder of Greenpeace and the Sea Shepherd Society, explains that to gain extended attention in the media, a story requires "sex, scandal, violence, and celebrity," an argument that has support in the media literature (Bennett 2012; Bennett, Lawrence, and Livingston 2008; Cook 2005; Epstein 1973; Suzuki and Dressel 2004, 117). In a 24/7 news cycle world, media organizations buy and sell public figures as products in a virtual marketplace that demands sensational and entertaining stories that are likely to attract viewers without alienating advertisers (Bennett 2012; Cook 2005, 2–3, 102–4; Epstein 1973, 259, 262–63; Stephens 2007; Thompson 1999).

To illustrate, a foreign editor once defended a story that was published in the *Los Angeles Times* suggesting that public support for whaling had increased because the numbers of protests had declined. When Paul Watson confronted the editor and argued that the logic was flawed, the editor responded, "Well, you'll just have to go out and sink another whaling boat, won't ya?" According to Watson, "They're not going to give you the time of day if you're trying to talk about something based on information and statistics or whatever. They're only interested in dramatics." In 1984 Watson drew attention to aerial shooting of arctic wolves in British Columbia, prompting two weeks of media coverage. The story included all of the elements Watson described as essential: violence against wolves, threats against activists, and an environment minister taking a bribe from a game hunting organization. For sex and celebrity, he recruited the famous model and actor Bo Derek to talk about the issue. A reporter at the press conference questioned Derek's expertise, to which Watson responded, "You make the rules and we play the game. . . . If I had the best wolf biologist in the world and called this conference, there'd be an empty room. But because Bo Derek is our spokesperson, it'll be the headline of your newspaper tomorrow—and there's nothing you can do about it" (Suzuki and Dressel 2004, 117–18).

What does current research conclude about the ability of celebrities to attract media attention toward political issues? Very little. Some scholars

argue that celebrities can be powerful political communicative agents who raise awareness, raise the profile of some issues, and legitimize some actions (Njoroge 2011; Rosamond 2011). They may provide focus for causes, which make them successful in political communication (Wheeler 2011). Having said that, some scholars argue that celebrities do not increase focus on an issue, but rather contribute to a larger media bandwagon effect where celebrities speak about issues that are already known to the public (Hawkins 2011; Tait 2011). Using the *New York Times* as a source, Strine found no significant difference in the amount of media attention given to committees that host celebrity witnesses versus committees that do not (Strine 2004).

Persuasion. Politicians cannot gain public office without some ability to persuade others. Likewise, many celebrities are believed to be quite persuasive, perhaps based on the nature of their art and skills. Musicians and actors in particular are good at exploiting emotion. Anecdotally, some empirical examples support this assertion. Joan Baez successfully appealed to President Jimmy Carter to send the Navy's Sixth Fleet to rescue refugees from Southeast Asia (Ali 2013; P. Berman 2005, 242). Bono famously made conservative Senator Jesse Helms cry by connecting with him on their shared Christian faith, which broke his resistance to release aid to Africa (Busby 2007). Drummond summarizes how these sorts of events run counter to expectations: "We expected that [Bono's involvement] might be concerts and records, but it turned out that Bono's a very brilliant political lobbyist" (Stockman 2005, 154).

Most research on celebrity persuasion focuses on endorsements, particularly product endorsements. While celebrities are highly desired for advertisement, in practice, placing an attractive celebrity next to a car to sell it is not as simple a prospect as it seems. Celebrities do attract attention to ads (Atkin and Block 1983; Miciah and Shanklin 1994) and make ads more believable and memorable (Friedman and Friedman 1979; Kamins 1970; Lammie 2007). Celebrities also improve brand recognition (Gamson 1994, 62; Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983). Attractiveness also is potentially persuasive, serving as a cue to make inferences about one's characteristics, abilities, and motivations (Berscheid and Walster 1974). Sources that are familiar, physically attractive, or similar to the target audience are more

persuasive (McGuire 1985). Celebrities are often attractive and usually familiar, which makes them more persuasive.

However, the attractiveness of the actor does not necessarily transfer to the product. If anything, the "cultural meaning" attached to a celebrity can be transferred to "the symbolic properties of the product" (McCracken 1989). If cultural meaning can be transferred to a product, then advertisers must be extremely careful about their choices of celebrity because of the potential for both positive and negative meanings. Celebrities are most effective when the image of the product matches the image of the celebrity (Friedman and Friedman 1979; Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1970; McCracken 1989). In one celebrity endorsement study, Jessica Simpson's perceived positive attributes such as "sexy and fun" transferred to nail polish and high heels, and her perceived negative attributes such as "weak and ditzy" transferred to a mismatched product, pocketknives. It should go without saying that a consumer who wants to purchase a pocketknife would not look favorably upon a product that might make them look weak and ditzy (Tuttle 2012). While none of these findings relate to a celebrity's ability to persuade a target audience on a political issue, it is not a stretch to suggest that attractive celebrities might be effective at endorsing politicians or causes, assuming that the celebrity is a good match for the candidate or cause.

However, celebrity product endorsement rarely increases purchasing behavior or intentions, a surprising finding considering the amount of advertising money poured into the pockets of celebrities. Advertisers' expectations have only been satisfactorily met in one out of five campaigns (Lammie 2007; Miciah and Shanklin 1994). An overexposed celebrity generates lower consumer purchase intention than an underexposed celebrity (Roy 2012). A celebrity will be an ineffective endorser if a product cannot enhance a person's attractiveness or if it detracts from the person's attractiveness (Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1970).[6]

Celebrities' skills at political persuasion have not been extensively studied, although there is a growing body of research on celebrity endorsements of political candidates. Celebrity endorsements may be helpful in getting attention, raising money, and appealing to youth (Atkin and Block 1983; Becker 2010, 116; Meyer and Gamson 1995; Pease and Brewer 2008; Torrey 2008), although the relationship between youth and celebrity persuasion has been disputed (Duvall 2010; Lammie 2007, 4;

Wood and Herbst 2007). Scholars identified a positive effect on Barack Obama's candidacy when Oprah Winfrey endorsed him, but whether that effect is unique to Obama and Winfrey is not established (Garthwaite and Moore 2008; Pease and Brewer 2008). Nownes (2012) argues that celebrity endorsements are more likely to influence citizens' views of political parties than vote choices or views of political candidates. Moreover, third-person effects are also strong. Individuals tend to believe that celebrity endorsements are more likely to affect other people, particularly those in out-groups. Celebrity endorsements may not change the attitudes of voters, but may instead have a polarizing effect on voters who are already decided on candidates (Brubaker 2011).

Much less research has focused on celebrity endorsements on political issues. If endorsements of candidates are like endorsements of issues, one could infer that celebrities are more likely to be persuasive with young people and less likely to be persuasive on polarizing issues. Political science research on persuasion is consistent with these inferences. When one's views are closely tied to moral values, people are resistant to change and perceive their opinions as facts (Johnson and Eagly 1989; Morgan, Skitka, and Wisneski 2010; Turiel 2002). Becker's research concludes that celebrities were more likely to be persuasive with young people, young women, and Democrats, particularly where the issues had low importance or were "soft" social issues like same-sex marriage. Celebrities were less persuasive on "hard" issues such as the economy. Moreover, video appeals by celebrities were more effective than text appeals, which implies that audiences may respond to broadcast media differently than newspapers or other written media (Becker 2010, 112, 116).

Lammie (2007) argues that persuasion is affected by a "three-way interactive process" involving the celebrity, party identification, and the perceived affiliation of the celebrity so that party identity is central to evaluation of the celebrity's message. Democrats respond to certain celebrities differently than Republicans, a finding consistent with the larger political science literature on party identification and persuasion (Bartels 2002; Brady and Sniderman 1985; A. Campbell et al. 1980; Dancey and Goren 2010; Gaines et al. 2007). Moreover, party match improves persuasion, suggesting that someone delivering a message who shares beliefs with a target audience is more likely to be persuasive (Nelson and Garst 2005).

Symbolic politics. "Symbolic politics" can also be considered a form of information politics.[7] It is the "ability to call upon symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away" physically or emotionally (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 23–24). A public speaker who is skilled at the use of symbolic politics can refer to symbols in order not only to inspire and unite but also as a dividing line between identity groups, polarizing the audience. In this way, symbols bring people together and tear them apart, depending upon the rhetoric of the speaker. Objects such as flags are perceived as a threat to some and reassurance to others. Images of leaders and statements attributed to them are subjectively interpreted based upon the individual's beliefs. For example, the American flag carries a positive connotation to Americans and a hostile one to international actors who are threatened by American power. Photos of Barack Obama or Donald Trump carry different meaning for Democrats than for Republicans. Thus rhetorical references to particular public officials can unite or divide people, a strategy routinely utilized in election campaign advertisements (Edelman 1985; Perloff 2013).

Symbols are universally used by politicians and activists alike to frame arguments and ultimately to persuade a target audience (Barnett 1998, 4, 10; Keck and Sikkink 1998, 22–23; Grove and Carter 1999). Activists attempt to connect target actors with causes, and people outside of their normal experience negatively associate "bad" actors with despised groups or individuals or unify disparate groups around common ideas. Even if people do not identify with celebrities, they may identify with the norms that celebrities activate (Lindenberg, Joly, and Stapel 2011). Thus, celebrities are as capable as anyone of utilizing these rhetorical arguments (Marshall 1997, 54–55; Weber 1978, 1112).

What makes celebrities different is that, like a flag or a president, they are symbols too. Media attention provides cultural meaning for celebrities —first, based on their role as entertainers and the symbolic information associated with the image they have constructed and the entertainment they produce; second, based on the personal information they share about their supposedly "real" life that deepens public knowledge about them. The public then forms subjective impressions of them based on this information (Dyer and McDonald 1998; Marshall 1997, 19).

Sometimes the political symbolism works as intended where artist, organizers, and "art" coincide to deliver the framed message. Consider the

case of David Hasselhoff's appearance in Berlin in 1989. Hasselhoff is often apologetically described as "big in Germany." During that time, one German newspaper displayed the headline "Hasselhoff: Not since Elvis" and another displayed "Hasselhoff: Not since the Beatles" (S. Barr 2001; Did David Hasselhoff Really Help End the Cold War? 2004). One month after the official fall of the Berlin Wall, Hasselhoff was invited to headline a New Year's Eve concert there. He apparently insisted that he would do it if he could sing his number one hit, "Looking for Freedom," from atop the Berlin Wall itself. This request was supported and arranged by the West German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the East German communist leader, Erich Honecker. German reunification was on the mind of many, but not a "done deal" at that point. Hasselhoff's role in this historical event is clearly not quantifiable, although organizers of this event likely had symbolic politics in mind when they put "The Hoff" on "The Wall" (Bainbridge 2006; Orth 2006; Patel 2013; Witchel 2010, 4–5). They were "looking for freedom."

In many cases, celebrities' political messages are more subjectively interpreted than the message advanced by Hasselhoff. The Beatles' 1967 performance of "All You Need Is Love" on the first global television program, transmitted by Telstar to 400 million viewers worldwide, was "intended to promote global understanding amid the Cold War, Vietnam, and Third World revolutionary movements" but was also interpreted as John Lennon's attempt to "sell peace to the world," a message that simultaneously had more culturally subversive implications within the 1960s counterculture (Greene 2016, 36). Likewise, "Born in the USA" by Bruce Springsteen was critical of the United States for its treatment of returning Vietnam veterans and implicitly critical of the Reagan administration for shutting down factories and closing off opportunities for veterans to return to work. However, in the 1984 presidential campaign, the Reagan and Mondale campaigns both adopted the song as their own. The anthemic riff and repeating chorus of "I was born in the USA" in front of a backdrop of American flags and festive cheering destroyed any irony that the song intended. Listeners, politicians, and audiences in general separated the literal message of the song from the feeling evoked by the music and its contextual use (Grossberg 1987; Kruse 1999; Marshall 1997, 75; Mattern 1998, 17; T. Rose 1994, 18).

Moreover, celebrities and their entertainment products are often subjectively interpreted when celebrities do not deliberately make a political statement at all. Something that was not intentionally political may be interpreted politically whether the celebrity intended it or not. Elvis Presley, for example, blurred the lines between acceptable behaviors for black and white youth, making a rock-and-roll art form accessible to a young white audience. He simultaneously drew strong symbolic lines separating youth and adult (Altschuler 2003; Iton 2000, 216). The Monkees' television program, on the other hand, made rock and roll and the counterculture symbolically more palatable to adults during a time when the "generation gap" split a nation (Perone 2004).

The informational "power of persona." Like politicians, celebrities bring together many diverse qualities in one symbolic person—a series of traits that are otherwise attainable when distributed across an entire organization or movement—the promise of communicating information, identity, and symbolic meaning clearly, effectively, and efficiently. DeMars (2005, 9) refers to this as the "power of a persona—projected onto the world stage by an NGO, conveying a contagious moral conviction, and offering a simple and readily imitated technique for action." All of these qualities make celebrities potentially powerful practitioners of symbolic politics. It also means that some people may be more receptive to celebrities' messages than others and that efforts to get involved in politics may potentially fail.

Referent Power

A combination of promotional ability and personal artistic or physical talents and traits translates to "referent power," the ability to be likable and relatable (French and Raven 1959). In an information-soaked, media-connected political environment, referent power is available to nontraditional political actors such as entertainers, as well as attractive and skilled politicians. Referent power is profoundly useful because it translates to love, adoration, emulation, and support from an audience (Jauss 2008; Marshall 1997, 56). It is the element that has the potential to transform the parasocial relationship into a personal sense of ethical obligation and sympathy for causes that seem distant (Rosamond 2011; Wheeler 2011).

Therefore, celebrities may be more skilled at attaining and exercising referent power than many public officials.

Celebrities attract "admiration and interest and are usually credited with capacities superior to those of other people," which gives them a charismatic power (Kurzman et al. 2007; Marshall 1997, 20; Tsaliki, Frangonikolopoulos, and Huliaras 2011, 9; Weber 1978, 241). Across age groups, individuals affectively "personalize" these distant celebrities, connect emotionally to them, and speak as if they know them and have a relationship with them. People may not share an unconditional admiration and interest in all celebrities, but they tend to have powerful feelings for the ones they do like and a fairly universal understanding of a celebrity's image within the culture (Caughey 1984; Lammie 2007, 1; Marshall 1997, 56–61). Celebrities play a role in individuals' construction of their own personal identity and meaning. People live vicariously through celebrities, imagining themselves as athletes, rock stars, or in a role played by a favorite actor. Moreover, they want to buy into a discourse where individuals can make a positive difference where perhaps they cannot do so themselves. Celebrities thus compensate for qualities absent in "normal" people's lives. As a result, citizens may become more aware of social problems because of their identification with celebrities. Thus celebrities may be able to influence audiences to get involved or to support causes as another means to *consume* politics and activism in the same way they consume entertainment (Dyer and McDonald 1998; Gitlin 1998; Marshall 1997, 19).

One foundation of their referent power with an audience may lie in their perceived "authenticity," which gives them a level of inflated moral standing based upon their status as artists (Balliger 1999, 61; Fenster and Swiss 1999, 228). Much has been written about this, particularly in regard to the aforementioned emergent authenticity norm in popular music (Marshall 1997, 150). According to Alice Marwick, authenticity is not exactly the same as "sincerity." Authenticity has to do with uniformity of presentation: comparing current actions against past ones for consistency, while at the same time displaying one's "hidden inner life," a projection of "honesty without pretense," which connects celebrities with audiences (Marwick 2013, 120; Trilling 1972).

In the case of celebrity, authenticity includes the connection between a celebrity's "art" to an expression of his/her inner emotions, feelings, and personality (Huddart 2005; Tolson 2001). While the public has felt more

jaded about public officials, the authenticity discourse may have created an opening for the public to feel less jaded about the intentions of entertainers (West and Orman 2003, x). People recognize that celebrities are interested in making money. However, they are also inclined to believe that they are trustworthy and invested in their art or entertainment (Atkin and Block 1983). As Jimmy Buffett observes: “I love to watch politicians come to my shows and be fascinated by how the crowd loves us, because they don’t get that. And they want that more than anything. So many times people have asked me, ‘How do you do that?’ I go, ‘Because I tell them the truth. I’m not there to make it up. I’m not asking for their money. I’m just doing it.’ It’s an amazing thing that what they so desperately want *we* have. And we have it because we’re able to do it from the heart” (Crosby and Bender 2000, *99).*

In interviews for this book, respondents were asked, “Are celebrities authentic? What makes them authentic? Or not authentic? Is there something about their art, performance, music that relates to this?” Their responses are consistent with Buffett’s observation:

> “Celebrities aren’t typically paid for their view nor are they standing to financially gain.”
> “Some actors and music artists are very passionate about certain social issues, and they display it in their work.”
> “Most celebrities are neutral, but some have characteristics in their work and lives that people relate to, which I believe makes them authentic to people.”
> “They truly believe what they are advocating and aren’t afraid to show it in their music/performances.”

According to one respondant, “Trump is a different type of politician.” Senior Trump advisor Boris Epshteyn suggests that this is exactly what connected Trump to his target demographic (Greene 2016). Trump is able to be authentic because people did not believe that he was running to enrich himself. He displayed passion, he was not afraid to say things that were offensive, and he genuinely communicated these qualities through performance.

On the other hand, some scholars argue that modern audiences are sawier than they were years ago. With the increased glut of reality television stars

and the increased exposure to fame via a diversity of media delivery systems, the public does not view celebrities in the glorified patterns of the past. Awareness of celebrities' need for self-aggrandizement may lead to greater skepticism on the part of the audience (Tsaliki, Frangonikolopoulos, and Huliaras 2011, 10). According to another respondent, "I hope celebrities authentically back whatever they are speaking up or out against. But as performers it is easy for them to fake this."

AGENDA SETTING

Thus far, this chapter has summarized the rise of celebrities in politics and detailed the ways in which celebrities are potentially influential. As suggested above, when celebrities get involved in issue advocacy, they ideally hope to get people to pay attention to an issue and to persuade people to support policies. One way of visualizing how celebrities, as well as activists and politicians, attempt to gain attention for their issue and persuade the powerful is through the concept of agenda setting. The agenda is "the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time" (Kingdon 2011, 3). Given the incredible demands placed upon those who hold legitimate power to meet a diversity of needs, not all ideas and policies receive the same amount of attention. Agenda setting is the process of making issues important to controllers of information and decision makers.

In this process, policy entrepreneurs identify a problem, raise it in the public consciousness, get target actors to acknowledge the problem, and persuade them to make it a priority (Crowley 2003, 13–14; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Batliwala and Brown 2006, 5). The public policy literature identifies key legislators or committed activists as policy entrepreneurs.[8] Likewise, celebrities are policy entrepreneurs in a media-saturated age. Celebrities have more of these entrepreneurial resources than average, which offers them potential access and power beyond the reach of the typical citizen entrepreneur.

Table 2.2 illustrates how policy entrepreneurs engage in two basic strategies in order to achieve their ends (Crowley 2003, 14–27). The first is a risk reduction strategy. If policy entrepreneurs necessarily accept a level

of risk by simply entering the political game, it is in their best interest to minimize or diffuse cost and uncertainty, which usually plays out in terms of “strong” or “weak” approaches. A weak approach is “individualized.” The policy entrepreneur attempts to achieve his/her goals through force of will, based on the strength of personality, with many of the efforts and resources deployed by the individual, only networking if absolutely necessary. While this approach may be effective, it means that the individual shoulders much of the risk and gains may be slow without support from a larger organization. A strong approach places the policy entrepreneur in a larger organization, networking with others to achieve goals to offer a diversity of skills and resources as well as a more enduring institution for future lobbying efforts (Crowley 2003, 11–14). To return to the example of Bono lobbying in Congress: Bono could have set up meetings with representatives and senators without connecting to an advocacy network. He might have been persuasive and spotlighted an issue as a result of his efforts. However, his connection to a larger political network likely gave him better access, a louder voice, and opportunities for ongoing relationships with political figures. These risk reduction strategies are consistent with what has already been discussed about celebrity behavior when engaging in advocacy. Celebrities with more money and resources and those that are institutionalized are theoretically less likely to be exposed to risk.

A second strategy is called “shakeout.” As a policy window opens, policy entrepreneurs perceive opportunities to disrupt the status quo equilibrium or to capitalize on a disruption. Shakeout refers to the competition between status quo forces (incumbent entrepreneurs) and reform forces (challenger entrepreneurs) that results in some ideas, players, and organizations rising to prominence and others falling by the wayside. Shakeout strategies, therefore, include those activities that policy entrepreneurs employ in order to survive the shakeout and achieve the policy goal. Illegitimate or weak shakeout approaches include the use of force, coercion, illegal activities, and undemocratic tactics. Legitimate or strong shakeout approaches include lobbying, media exposure, and institutional changes, all approaches utilized by celebrity activists (Crowley 2003, 14–18, 20).

Table 2.2 Strategies of Policy Entrepreneurs

Strategies	Legitimate (strong)	Illegitimate (weak)
Risk reduction strategies	Cooperative (highly organized, system-based, thick)	Individualized (personality-based, atomized, thin)
Shakeout strategies	Lobbying, media exposure, institutional changes	Force, coercion, illegal activities, undemocratic tactics

Source: Crowley 2003, 13, 18–19.

In the "shakeout" process, entrepreneurs attempt to open a "window of opportunity" or "policy window" where the conditions are ripe for policy change (Galligan and Burgess 2005; Jaiani and Whitford 2011; Kingdon 2011, 87). In some cases, these policy windows occur when a public disaster occurs that draws attention to an issue. Some might argue that the 2012 Sandy Hook tragedy in which twenty children were fatally shot opened a policy window that changed public attitudes toward gun control and potentially softened the attitudes of gun control opponents. Celebrities spoke out in favor of gun control, including Susan Sarandon, Mia Farrow, and Ben Stiller (Loinaz 2012). While one cannot easily quantify whether their statements helped to inspire adoption of more restrictive gun laws across the country, this is an example of celebrities exploiting a window of opportunity. Likewise, chapter 3 summarizes many examples in which celebrities attempt to create policy windows by appearing with politicians, organizing events, making public statements, or visiting problem areas in the expectation that the media will follow them and open a public conversation about the issue.

John Kingdon describes three convergent "streams" that have the capacity to open a policy window. The first is the problem stream, the salience of a set of issues or problems that the public perceives at a given time. The second is the policy stream, which includes various solutions to these problems formulated by public officials, legislative staffers, bureaucrats, academics, and interest group participants (Kingdon 2011, 116). The third is the political stream, which includes shifts in public opinion, results of elections, turnover of public officials, changes in ideological and partisan distributions in a decision-making body, and interest groups' pressure campaigns.[9] In the first instance, celebrities can attempt to raise awareness about an issue. In the second, they can lobby public officials to adopt certain policies. In the third stream, they can attempt to endorse candidates or to affect public opinion.

Another way to categorize these streams is according to the "insider" and "outsider" strategies they deploy.[10] The second stream largely focuses on insider strategies where policy entrepreneurs act as "hidden participants" by connecting themselves to policymakers or injecting themselves into the policymaking process where possible. Insiders are less likely to affect the public agenda but are more likely to narrow alternatives once the agenda has already been set (Kingdon 2011, 72–74). Ultimately, the intervention of entrepreneurs directly in the policy process has been shown to affect agenda setting and ultimately policy innovation. The first and third streams of agenda setting, for the most part, comprise "outsider" strategies. When the focus is on the public's perceived salience of an issue, public opinion, elections, and campaigns by advocacy groups, outsider strategies are more likely to be utilized (Baumgartner, Green-Pedersen, and Jones 2008; Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Birkland 1997; R. W. Cobb and Elder 1975; R. W. Cobb and Ross 1997, 26; Soroka 2003). Public officials and activists alike engage in public information political strategies to draw attention to issues and to persuade the public and key players, often through framing (Grove and Carter 1999; Jerit 2008; Maoz 1990; Matthes 2012).

Celebrities have, on many occasions, undertaken insider strategies. To name a few, actor Michael J. Fox lobbied Congress to pass stem cell legislation, hoping for a potential cure for Parkinson's disease (Stanley 2006). Actor Fran Drescher lobbied to pass Johanna's Law, also known as the Gynecologic Cancer Education and Awareness Act, which allocated $6.5 million for a national gynecologic cancer education campaign (Gynecologic Cancer Education and Awareness Act of 2005 2006). In perhaps the first example of a celebrity becoming intimately involved in a congressional policymaking process, Harry Chapin worked on the Presidential Commission on Domestic and International Hunger and lobbied Congress in an attempt to pass legislation to change food policy toward Africa (Coan 2001, 373).

Celebrity outsider strategies are obvious because of their broad public appeal. When Angelina Jolie makes an appeal for funding education in Africa on *Dateline NBC* or George Clooney protests alongside public officials in front of the Sudanese embassy, they are attempting to gain media attention for their cause and frame their arguments to persuade their target audiences: the mass public and policymakers. A trip to Congress is not necessary to execute these strategies. However, according to multiple

scholars, the media are essential. According to Shanto Iyengar, “The well-known ‘agenda-setting’ effect refers to the tendency of people to cite issues ‘in the news’ when asked to identify the significant problems facing the nation” (Iyengar 1994, 132). Timothy Cook describes the interaction between politicians and media: “Politicians dictate conditions and rules of access and designate certain events and issues as important by providing an arena for them. Journalists, in turn, decide whether something is interesting enough to cover, the context in which to place it, and the prominence the story receives.” Nontraditional political actors can make news on their own terms if “the material they provide is high in the production values that would make the news interesting” (Cook 2005, 102). Social movements may produce sporadic information, usually on the reporter’s terms, but the escalation of this information can “set the agenda and shift the terms of the debate” (Cook 2005, 102). Indeed, the visibility of an issue is a key factor in swaying public opinion and even voting behavior (Hopmann et al. 2010). In addition, Peter Mortenson (2010) establishes a positive correlation between the amount of time the public spent focused on an issue and the amount of money a legislature spent on that issue, suggesting that successful outsider agenda-setting strategies may affect policy outcomes.

Insider and outsider strategies are not mutually exclusive. One can make public statements and privately lobby. A celebrity’s insider lobbying efforts can become public news and an outsider strategy as well. People pay attention when Bono meets Bush or Clooney meets Obama. The insider is simultaneously a “visible participant” (Kingdon 2011, 72–74). However, it is methodologically helpful to separate the strategies. Proving that a celebrity can set a public agenda by making issues seem more salient or by framing arguments in the media is different from proving that a celebrity can successfully lobby or insert him/herself into the policy-making process and produce changes there.

CAN CELEBRITIES SET AGENDAS?

This chapter has summarized many anecdotal cases of celebrity successes, but much of the academic literature surveyed offers a mixed to pessimistic view when it comes to the ability of celebrities to set agendas. As Nick Symmonds or Ben Affleck might expect, original survey research produced

for this book received its share of cynical comments about celebrities from "I don't really care" to "Who cares anything about her, seriously?" to "Don't give a flying f***."

Perhaps the cynics are correct. Perhaps few care about the statements or actions of celebrities. Still, enough people took Trump seriously to elect him president, and anecdotal stories of persistent celebrities advocating for unlikely causes with some victories beg for an answer. Are their efforts in vain? The following chapters will provide evidence on three criteria that support prospects for successful agenda setting. The first criterion is issue visibility, which is the focus of chapter 3. Does the celebrity have the "spotlighting" power described by Belafonte and Bono? When a celebrity publicly involves him/herself in an issue, is there a heightened level of media coverage? If so, celebrity involvement may affect issue salience, which has been associated with agenda setting (B. C. Cohen 1963; Cook 2005; Hopmann et al. 2010; Iyengar 1994; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; McCombs and Shaw 1972; Mortensen 2010; Zaller 1992). Moreover, how do celebrities and politicians compare in this spotlighting power? The second criterion is credibility, the subject of chapter 4. It is important to gain media attention. Once a celebrity has the attention of a mass audience, is s/he credible? While credibility alone may not directly translate to persuasion, this chapter establishes expertise and credibility as a potential source of power. Finally, chapter 5 explores the possibility that celebrities may be persuasive on political issues. If so, this book will establish an even stronger case for celebrity agenda setting. The chapter also addresses the process and potential for celebrity inside strategies.

Celebrities may not always successfully grab headlines or persuade audiences. Under what circumstances are celebrities more likely to be influential? What qualities must certain celebrities have to access this power? Thus the following chapters also address additional questions regarding informational power. Do more celebrities capture more media attention? Are they more effective in different forms of media or in different international media markets? How do politicians and celebrities compare on credibility and expertise? Must a celebrity be credible in order to be persuasive? Is it possible for a celebrity to be effective outside of an advocacy organization? Another set of questions focuses on referent power. Do the feelings or perceptions respondents have about celebrities make these respondents more likely to agree with celebrities? Must celebrities

only advocate “safe,” noncontroversial issues? Are they only persuasive on issues that are perceived as less important? Must the position advocated by the celebrity match a target audience’s expectations?

This chapter has not only illustrated how the changing business and media environments have made the news more open to celebrity activists and even celebrity candidates. It has also specified ways in which celebrities may possess and deploy different types of power. The next task of this book is to evaluate whether any of the theoretical powers of spotlighting or persuasion can be empirically documented. If so, it may be possible to conclude that celebrities can set public agendas.

3. The Power of Spotlighting: Celebrities and Issue Advocacy in the Media

John Prendergast is an activist. Before that, he worked for the U.S. National Security Council in the 1990s, was a special advisor to Susan Rice in the State Department, and helped broker peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia. In 2001, he resigned from his government work and began working with the International Crisis Group, a nongovernmental organization with a mission to resolve international conflicts. He helped form the Satellite Sentinel Project, designed to use satellite imagery to document human rights abuse. He cofounded the Darfur Dream Team: Sister Schools Initiative, intended to fund schools in Darfur refugee camps. He launched two campaigns intended to raise awareness about conflict resources in Africa and the use of mining to fund bloody civil wars. He also is a strategic advisor to the Not on Our Watch Project, a humanitarian group attempting to attract attention and bring an end to human rights violations and mass atrocities throughout the world.

Most media organizations typically would not write stories about people like Prendergast. He is a published author, has invited news organizations to cover issues in Africa, and has appeared as an expert on news programs, but he is not the focus of the story. However, he has a skill that has been essential to the functioning of his organizations and advocacy groups—a skill that brings attention to him and his efforts. He is adept at attracting celebrities to his causes. He got George Clooney involved in the Satellite Sentinel Project and in his efforts to raise awareness about Darfur. He founded the Darfur Dream Team with the assistance of NBA star Tracy McGrady and other basketball players. He coauthored books with Don Cheadle. In short, Prendergast knows celebrities and understands the value of celebrity influence.

In 2003, while Prendergast was working with the International Crisis Group, he met Angelina Jolie at a congressional event. During that meeting, they discussed the plight of refugees in high-conflict areas. He suggested

that her efforts to raise awareness might be amplified by taking an additional detour from her typical visits to refugee camps, so she agreed to go with him to visit a Congolese camp in a conflict zone. While there, she took pictures to document the civil war, the human rights violations, and the humanitarian crisis. These photographs were eventually featured on Washington DC's Holocaust Memorial Museum website. The traffic crashed the site. "If I had made that trip alone," Prendergast said, "maybe a few hundred people would have paid attention" (Bergner 2010).

Perhaps this story makes an obvious point: Angelina Jolie is more likely to attract attention than John Prendergast is. Despite the rhetorical power of Prendergast's testimony and the intuitive logic of this point, stories such as these remain informal anecdotes illustrating the political influence of celebrities. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a more objective measure of this influence, to determine if celebrities' political activities result in increased visibility of an issue. The basis of this evaluation is a content analysis study that focuses on the relationship between celebrity interventions in the media on political issues and the number of stories generated by those interventions. While salience is not everything, the ability to make an issue "known" is an important step in pushing the public and policymakers toward change.

EVALUATING MEDIA COVERAGE OF CELEBRITY ACTIVISM

How much attention can celebrities command? Do they garner attention only over their latest entertainment project, or does this attention extend to political issues as well? Are they drowned out by the political players and events competing for media time? A study examining the ability of celebrities to generate stories in the media based on their political activities will provide some answers.

For simplicity, this portion of the study focused on a limited number of issues and three major celebrities: Angelina Jolie, George Clooney, and Bono. All three are tightly connected to transnational advocacy groups. Jolie and Clooney's connection to Prendergast and his organizations is well documented. Bono has been associated with the Jubilee 2000 campaign and the NGO he cofounded, Debt AIDS Trade Africa (DATA), which in turn

merged with the ONE campaign. The first issue in this study focused on Jolie's involvement in AIDS education and treatment, as well as education for children in Africa. The second analyzed Clooney's attempts to find a resolution for the Darfur conflict. The third recalled Bono's debt relief efforts and attempts to prevent or end AIDS in Africa. While Jolie and Clooney have been committed to their causes for long periods, for the purpose of this study, their cases are relatively limited in duration to illustrate the magnitude of their effect. The case of Bono, on the other hand, is presented as a longer discourse with multiple events in order to illustrate how a celebrity may interact with civil society, the media, and government. In the process of researching these issues, additional celebrities appeared in the timelines. While these celebrities were not the initial focus of this study, their involvement adds to our understanding of celebrity behavior.[1]

The study used a Lexis-Nexis database, which included millions of stories from thousands of news outlets—including newspapers, television, and radio transcripts. Whenever there was a celebrity intervention—that is, whenever a celebrity said or did something to try to attract attention to a political issue, I counted the number of times the issue appeared in the database. An intervention could include writing an op-ed to sway public opinion in a newspaper, a public speech in which the celebrity discusses the issue, interviews with major media organizations, situations where celebrities are given editorial control over publications, meetings with public officials, involvement in protests, and attendance at a fund-raiser. As a baseline, I also counted the number of times the issue appeared before and after the event.

In some cases, interventions occurred in the United Kingdom and Canada. In those cases, the newspapers with the highest circulation from those countries were searched. Line graphs were generated, reflecting numbers of stories per day surrounding interventions. As a point of comparison with celebrities, interventions by politicians and other public figures were also included in the analysis. Ordinary Least Squared (OLS) regression tables were also generated to statistically compare the relative ability of celebrities versus politicians to generate attention for a political issue. These tables appear in appendix C.

CELEBRITY VICTORIES

Can a celebrity's intervention in a political cause raise the visibility of the issue in the media? In general, the answer is yes. The following cases illustrate some "victories" when celebrities intervene in public discourse.

Sudan (2012)

When heavy fighting broke out in Darfur in 2003, George Clooney grew concerned about the plight of the victims of the civil war in Sudan. In early 2012, he attempted to raise awareness about war crimes and victims of war in the Nuba Mountains. Conflict between the Sudanese government and rebels forced thousands to seek shelter in caves, resulting in a hunger crisis. Clooney, along with activist John Prendergast, wanted solutions to assist the displaced and to press the international community to hold President Omar al-Bashir accountable for human rights violations before the International Criminal Court (ICC). Clooney and Prendergast quietly slipped across the Sudanese border in March 2012, "saw burned-out villages and met with residents forced to seek shelter in caves because of aerial attacks by Sudan's military" (Straziuso 2012). This secret visit became public when Clooney returned to the United States and testified before Congress on what he had witnessed. The following day he met with President Obama. On the third day, he gave a speech and protested on the Sudanese embassy lawn along with United to End Genocide president Tom Andrews; Democratic representatives Jim McGovern, Al Green, Jim Moran, and John Olver; Martin Luther King III; and NAACP president Ben Jealous, among others. All were arrested for crossing a police line.

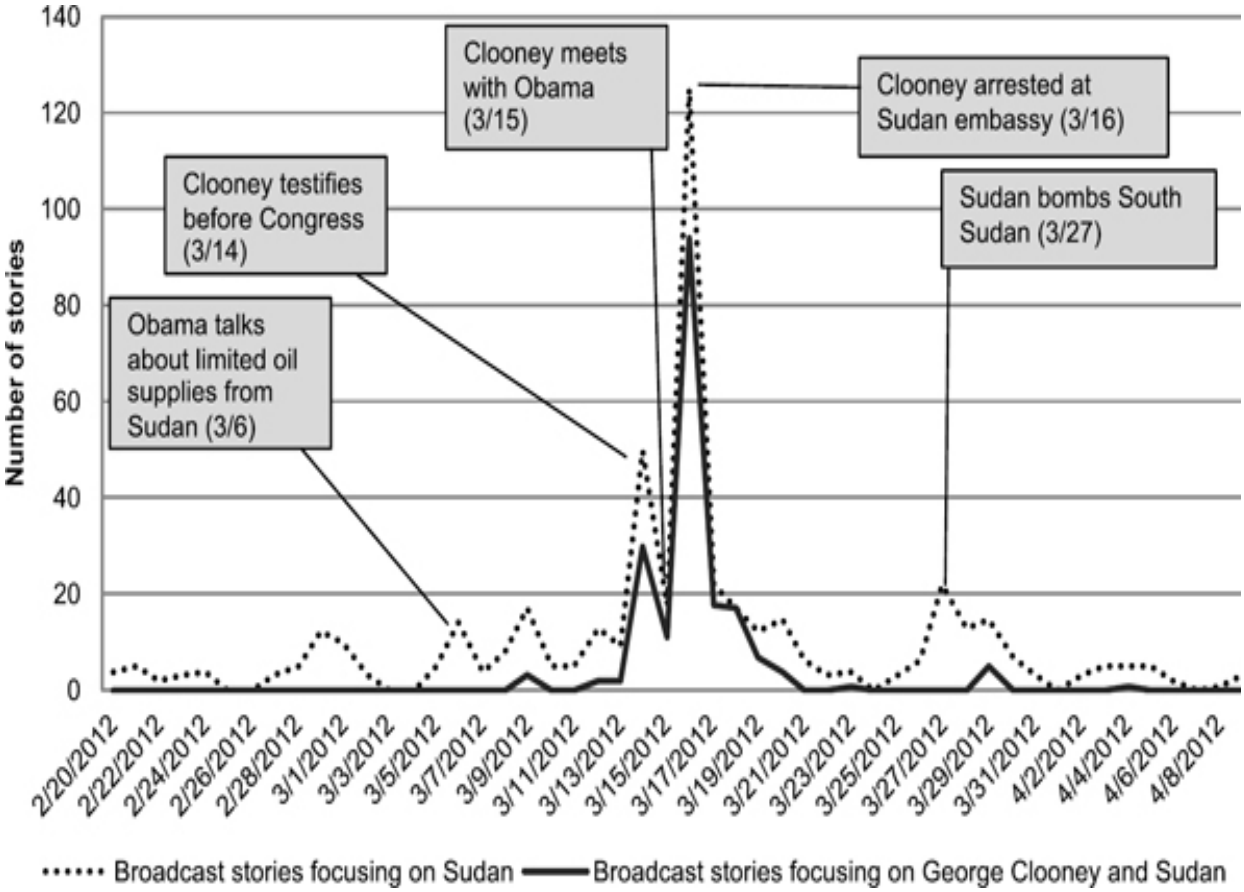


Figure 3.1 Broadcast Coverage of Sudan and Interventions by Clooney

Figure 3.1 illustrates Clooney's interventions and how they correlated with stories reported on Sudan in the broadcast media. On March 6, 2012, Barack Obama talked about oil supplies from Sudan, producing a moderate spike. However, once the coverage of Clooney's "secret" trip to Sudan began and he started talking publicly about Sudan, massive visible spikes occurred in the number of stories covered. The dotted line represents the total number of stories on Sudan reported per day. The solid line represents stories that discussed Sudan by mentioning Clooney in the story. As the graph indicates, the broadcast media hardly discussed Sudan without reference to Clooney. On the peak day of coverage—March 16, 2012—94 out of 125 stories were about George Clooney's arrest.

Does this coverage extend to U.S. newspapers as well? Figure 3.2 illustrates the relationship between Clooney's interventions and numbers of stories reported in U.S. newspapers. While the overall number of stories is not as high as those reported in broadcast media, the relationship appears to

be the same. Spikes coincide with Clooney's interventions, and newspapers consistently report on Clooney's activities as he intervenes.

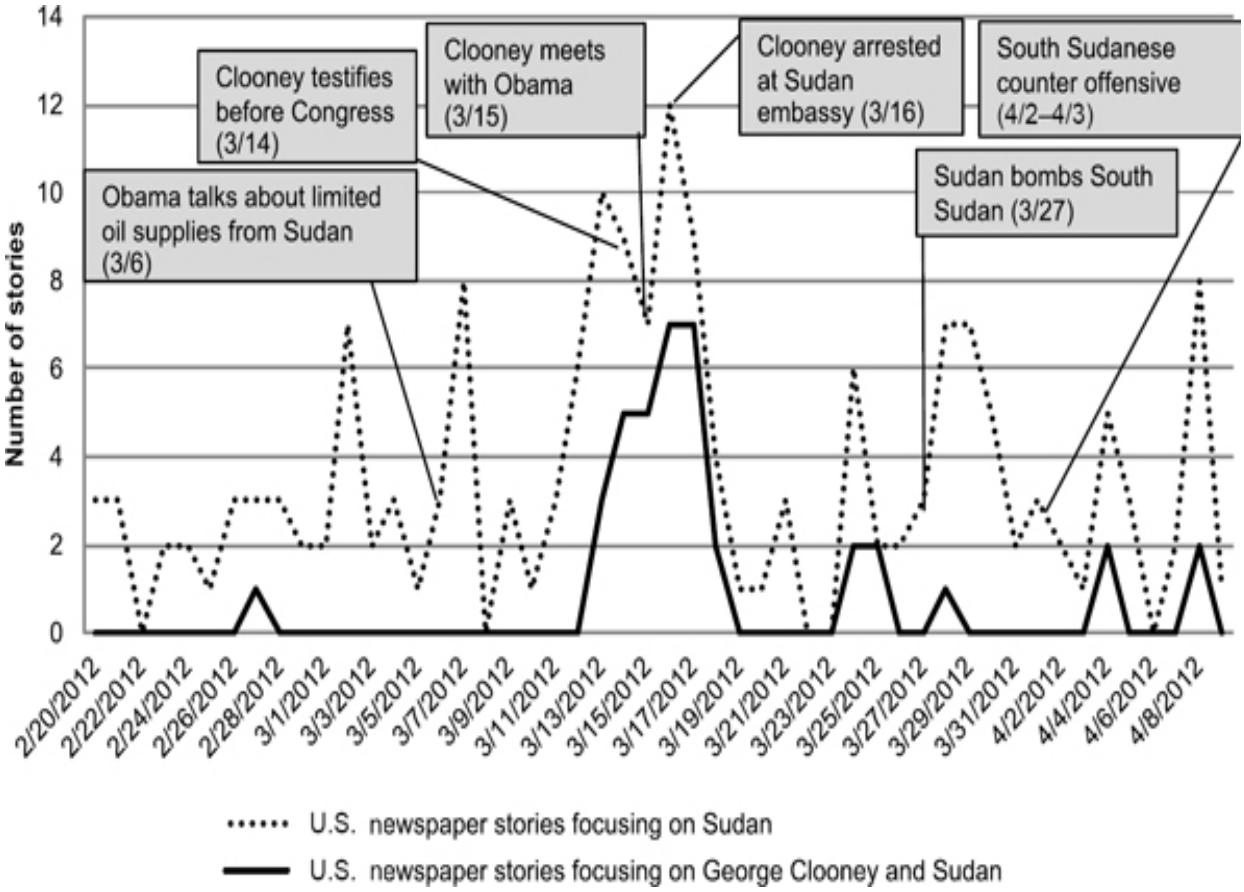


Figure 3.2 U.S. Newspaper Coverage of Sudan and Interventions by Clooney

The spikes in the line graphs correlate with Clooney's interventions and with stories about Clooney and Sudan. On an average day during this time, the broadcast media reported approximately six stories on Sudan. In contrast, a meeting between Clooney and Obama yielded sixty-eight stories. Clooney himself was likely to increase the number of stories to almost twenty-one during the period. Obama did not generate the same amount of attention on his own.[2] Therefore, Clooney alone and Clooney and Obama together produced a spike in the table; Obama alone did not. In addition, it is difficult to say whether the meeting with Obama generated an independent effect, since Clooney testified before Congress the previous day and was arrested the following day, and the majority of stories focused on this event, not only

on the day of the arrest but for the following week. Thus Clooney alone may have caused the spike.

U.S. newspaper coverage of Sudan showed a similar relationship. George Clooney's interventions produced approximately six stories in newspapers, when newspapers produced roughly three stories per day over this period. Clooney also generated significant attention when he met with Obama. In newspapers, Obama had a stronger effect than in broadcast media, creating a bump when he discussed oil in Sudan.[3] However, the rapid sequence of events makes it unclear whether the alliance of Clooney and Obama created a spike in the data or if it was Clooney alone. Nonetheless, Clooney—and Clooney with Obama—were more likely to generate interest in an issue than when Obama spoke alone on the issue.

Education in Africa (2006)

In the spring of 2006, Angelina Jolie was pregnant with her first biological child, Shiloh. In the midst of the entertainment press's manufactured frenzy, Jolie and partner Brad Pitt decided to have their child in Namibia. They claimed that they "wanted to find a place where they could spend some special time with their kids, Maddox, 4, and Zahara, 1." According to Reuters, Namibia "not only welcomed the movie stars, it handed over control of its international land borders and airspace to them." Namibian officials "bowed to pressure from Jolie and Pitt and granted them the right to ban foreign journalists from entering the country—a remarkable move for the Government of any sovereign state," in part because "their presence would be a massive boost to tourist income in the desperately poor country, where the average wage is $46 a week." Jolie and Pitt told public officials that they would leave unless the "paparazzi were brought to heel." Human rights groups criticized the Namibian government for expelling four foreign journalists (Reuters, Independent 2006).

To celebrate Shiloh's birth, Jolie and Pitt engaged in the high-profile activity of "donating $315,000 to state hospitals and a local school and community center" and promised to work with Namibia's first lady, Penexupifo Pohamba, to determine plans for future donations and beneficiaries (Silverman and Fromm 2006). Getty Images took the first photos, and the rights to the photos were sold to *People* magazine in the United States and *Hello!* magazine in the United Kingdom for $4.1 million

and $3.5 million dollars, respectively. All money was donated to charities to benefit African children (L. Rose 2007). Jolie capitalized on the run-up to the birth to draw attention to the beauty of Namibia and particularly the plight of many in Africa who suffer from inadequate education. This effort was publicized when *Today* host Ann Curry interviewed Jolie in Namibia in conjunction with "global education week" for shows broadcast on April 27 and April 30. The interviews emphasized how "global education" has become Jolie's "global mission" (Curry 2006). Figure 3.3 illustrates how the broadcast media and U.S. newspapers reported on this series of events.

Jolie and Pitt's arrival in Africa coincided with a burst of stories, climaxing with the first broadcast of Jolie's interview on April 27. The second interview on April 30 also produced a major spike. The only other notable spike in the sequence is associated with a speech by First Lady Laura Bush on May 14. The dotted line represents the total numbers of stories appearing in broadcast news on the subject of education in Africa. The dashed line counts the stories in U.S. newspapers on education in Africa, a pattern that displays few outstanding spikes compared with broadcast coverage. The solid line references those stories in broadcast media where education in Africa was discussed with direct reference to Angelina Jolie. There were no stories among the surveyed U.S. newspapers that discussed education in Africa by referencing her.

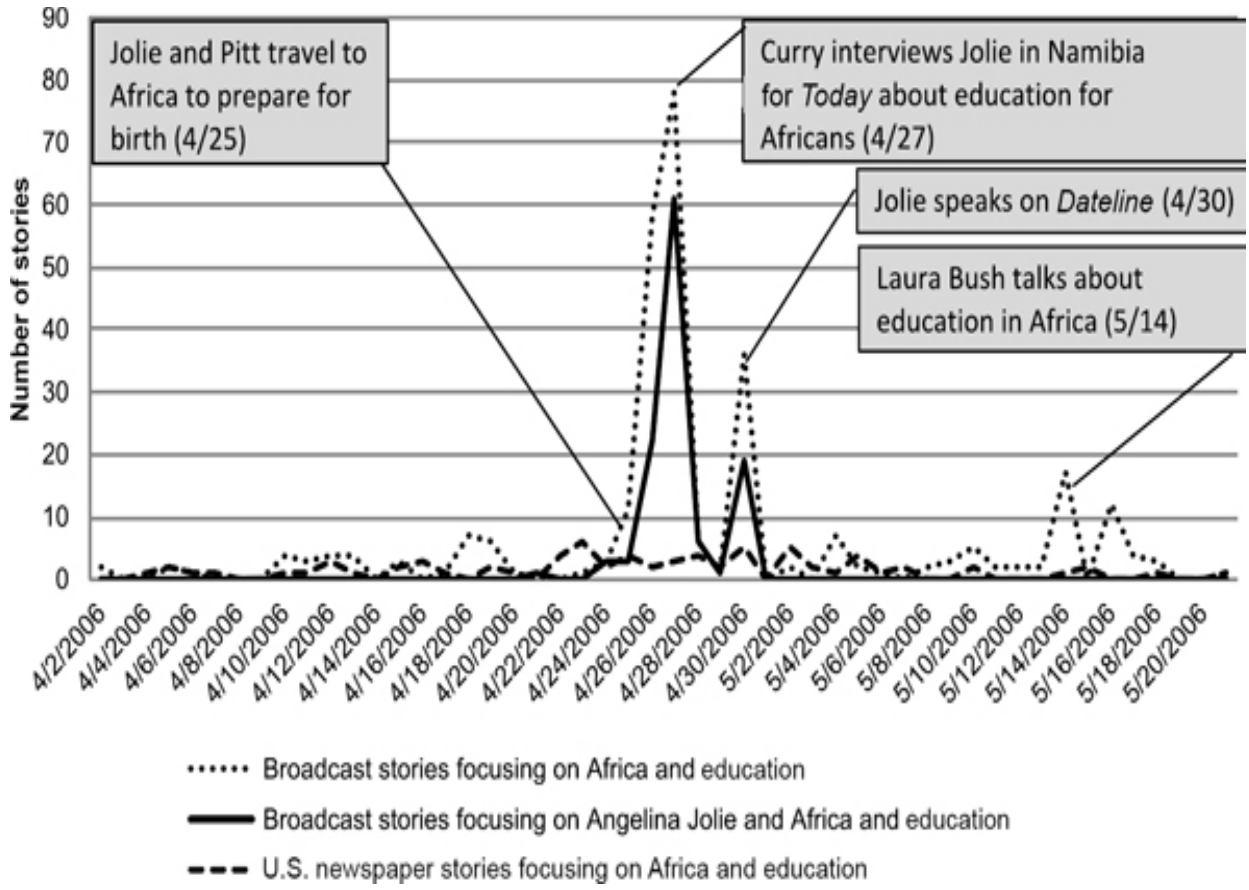


Figure 3.3 Broadcast News and U.S. Newspaper Coverage of Education in Africa and Interventions by jolie

Jolie's appearances and interviews drove broadcast news coverage on those days. The solid line spikes clearly coincide with the dotted line spikes. This effect is less visible among U.S. newspaper coverage, where the number of stories reported is much smaller. In broadcast media, Jolie's interventions produced approximately eighteen additional stories when one would ordinarily expect about two. When Pitt and Jolie appeared together, such as their move to Namibia for the birth of their child, their efforts produced fifty-three stories. Laura Bush also seemed to have a positive impact on coverage. In newspapers, however, Pitt and Jolie and Jolie acting alone had no discernible effect.[4]

Debt and AIDS in Africa (1999–2010)

Bono has been among the most persistent of celebrity political activists, devoting time and resources to addressing debt problems in developing

nations and interfacing with organizations to fight AIDS. Because of his long commitment to a series of causes, particularly debt and AIDS in Africa, the results of his efforts illustrate the effects of ongoing relationships with transnational advocacy networks, media organizations, and policymakers. Before focusing on debt and AIDS, he had worked with Bob Geldof on Band Aid's "Do They Know It's Christmas" charity single, the Live Aid international benefit concert to aid the victims of the Ethiopian famine. He had spoken out against U.S. policy toward Central America, performed as one of "Little" Steven Van Zant's Artists Against Apartheid, and worked with Greenpeace to take part in a protest against the Sellafield nuclear processing plant in the United Kingdom. He also organized a concert in 1997 in which he brought John Hume and David Trimble, Irish politicians from opposite ends of the political spectrum, together to support the Good Friday accords in Northern Ireland. As a result of these and dozens of other political activities, Bono was a logical choice as spokesman for Jamie Drummond's Jubilee 2000, an organization committed to getting the wealthiest countries in the world to commit to debt relief for the poorest (Flanagan 1995; N. D. Jackson 2008; Kaiser Health News 2003; McCormick et al. 2006; Richardson 2002; Street 2002). According to Drummond:

> Live Aid had been a moment of idealism and optimism and a lot of young people had got very excited and involved in something that didn't seem to be about their immediate interests, and this in the greedy 1980s. It had been one of those special moments, especially in the media. A lot of people had been inspired by what Bob Geldof, supported by people like Bono, did in Live Aid and Band Aid. . . . In 1995 only about half a dozen people had ever heard of Jubilee 2000. . . . I was going to try and basically persuade the music industry to support this young campaign. And, of course, one of the first people that came to mind was Bono—he having played a big role in Live Aid, but also since then having gone on from strength to strength. He also had a track record of having worked on issues like apartheid. He had worked with Amnesty International on human rights matters and had worked with Greenpeace. Plus, in Bono's case he has some kind of ability to communicate, and he possesses a religious or, rather, spiritual conviction in what he is doing (N. D. Jackson 2008, 180–81).

Jubilee 2000 was exposed to the world on the 1999 British Phonographic Industry's annual pop music awards show, the BRIT Awards, when Jubilee 2000 was given the Freddie Mercury Award for "an extraordinary contribution to charitable works or consciousness raising during the previous year" (Clark-Meads 1996, 84). After writing an op-ed for the *Guardian,* Bono made the nominating speech explaining the work, and the trophy was received by boxing legend Muhammad Ali (N. D. Jackson 2008, *66;* Street 2013). Two days later, British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown came out in favor of debt relief for developing countries, amid some debate in the press about whether Prime Minister Tony Blair's government had already been working on solutions to the debt problem. Others maintained that his statement was a reaction to the public attention lavished upon Bono and Jubilee 2000 after the high-profile award show in an effort to capitalize on public attention that was already directed toward public statements by celebrities.

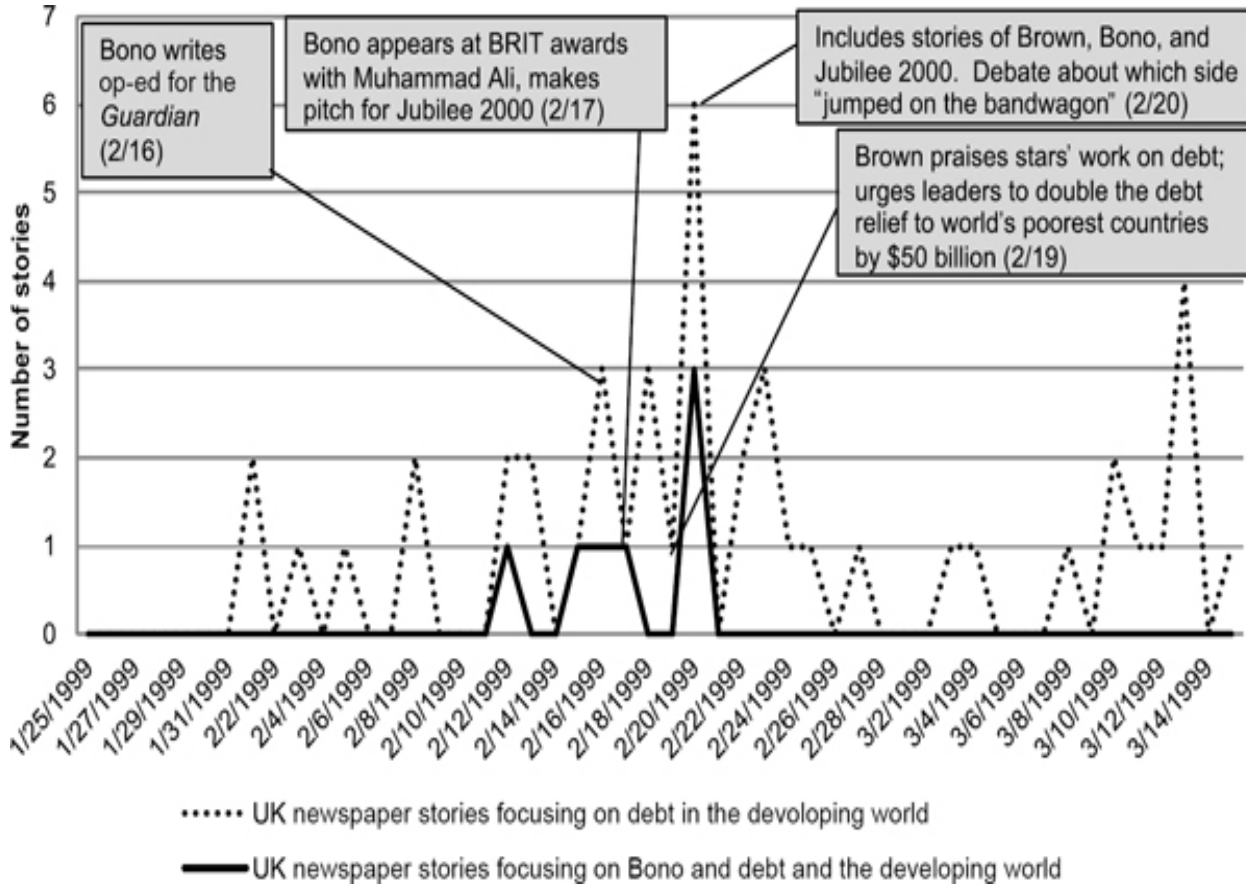


Figure 3.4 UK Newspaper Coverage of Debt in the Developing World

Results on analyses across broadcast media and U.S. newspapers produced inconclusive results, probably because of the difficulty in distinguishing between the effects of Bono's and Brown's interventions. However, an analysis of UK newspapers provides clearer results. Figure 3.4 illustrates the sequence of events according to the level of news coverage in British newspapers. Bono's interventions produced a series of spikes in news coverage, as did Gordon Brown's statement, and the ensuing debate about who started the conversation. As the solid line indicates, many of these stories included references to Bono.

Bono's interventions yielded two additional stories per day compared to an average news day.[5] At least in British newspapers, Bono's appearances yielded a spike in attention on the issue when compared with Brown's.

From Bono's initial involvement in the debt relief movement, he was involved not only in public advocacy but also in private lobbying of public officials. After working with the Clinton administration, he made inroads with the Bush administration, personally meeting George W. Bush in 2002. As a result, in April 2002 Bono and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill toured Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, and Ethiopia to promote economic development in Africa, an event that produced significant spikes in media coverage in U.S. newspapers but not in broadcast media.[6] Subsequently Bono developed a strong working relationship with national security advisor and secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and became involved in the policymaking process. Their collective work led to the Millennium Challenge, an effort to double aid to Africa, adding $5 billion annually. Bush eventually announced a U.S. Global AIDS Initiative known as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) at the 2003 State of the Union address, a commitment of $15 billion over five years to fight AIDS abroad.

By July 2003, the $3 billion per year that was pledged for the initiative had been partially gutted by Congress, and the Bush administration reduced the amount requested for the first year to $2 billion because they "didn't think the program could ramp up fast enough to absorb that amount of money early" (USA *Today* 2003). Bono and DATA disagreed, arguing that "the additional $1 billion could prevent 1.6 million HIV infections in Africa" (Kaiser Health News 2003). Bono had an interview with *USA Today* on September 15, and on September 16 he met with Bush, where they had a "good old row" about how much should be spent, engaging in some mild

“blaming” and “shaming” language in an attempt to build public support for fully funding the pledge. Still Bono respectfully acknowledged that Bush is “very passionate” about the problems plaguing Africa: “I believe the capacity is there. He doesn’t” (Batchelor 2003).

The Bush administration responded with its own public relations campaign. From summer through September 2003, Bush emphasized the importance of fighting AIDS globally in a series of speeches and fund-raisers. Their efforts climaxed with a speech by Colin Powell at the United Nations urging a new resolution on AIDS and Bush formally pledging his support the following day. Early October brought additional congressional hearings focused on Africa, and Bush hosted a meeting with the president of Kenya on October 6.

Neither Bono nor Bush was able to make a difference in U.S. newspaper coverage. They all received some coverage for their efforts, but their actions did not seem to drive broader coverage of this issue during this time. Bono had no advantage as a celebrity. Bush had no advantage as president. However, the broadcast media were more responsive. Figure 3.5 summarizes the major events from this period and how they were covered in the broadcast media.

The dotted line represents total stories about AIDS in Africa from broadcast transcripts. The solid line represents numbers of stories written about AIDS in Africa by referencing Bono. Despite some high-profile interventions and a visible correlation between Bono’s interventions and coverage of stories on a given day, Bono’s interventions did not compare with those made by President Bush or Secretary of State Colin Powell. One could say that during this time, the administration made the issue of AIDS in Africa their own.

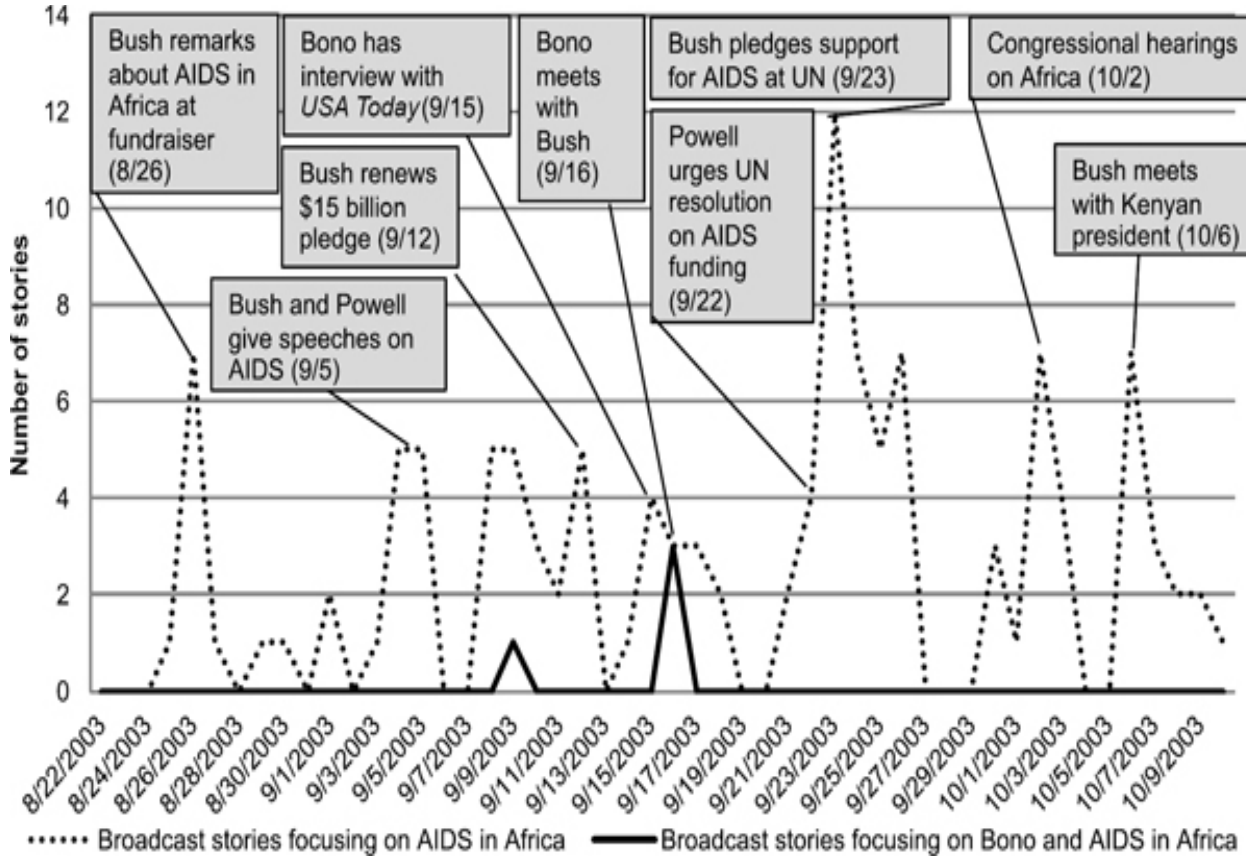


Figure 3.5 Broadcast News Coverage of AIDS in Africa by Bono

The politicians upstaged Bono. As Congress, the Bush administration, and the United Nations began formal political discussions about Africa, Bono's intervention seemed to have less effect. Bush and Congress produced visible spikes in coverage in broadcast news when promoting the issue in this high-profile manner, and Powell was also likely to generate attention. Bono's interventions do not register even when appearing with President Bush.[7]

The reverse was the case when Bono and a series of celebrities and political figures engaged in a series of interviews and events to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the discovery of AIDS in 2006. Figure 3.6 illustrates how celebrities seem to be driving news coverage. The dotted line illustrates the total number of stories reported per day on AIDS in Africa. The other lines represent coverage of celebrity interventions on the AIDS issue.

The first major spike on this story occurred when Pope Benedict XVI uttered the word *condom.* Birth control had been a relatively taboo subject at the Vatican, and his announcement that the Church might even study the

possibility of encouraging condom use to prevent AIDS in Africa was highly exceptional. The pope is more of a political figure than a celebrity and is clearly capable of commanding attention. Another significant announcement competed for media space that day, that a gel to cure HIV had passed some clinical trials. Thus the spike in coverage is large, but the pope was not the only actor driving the reporting.

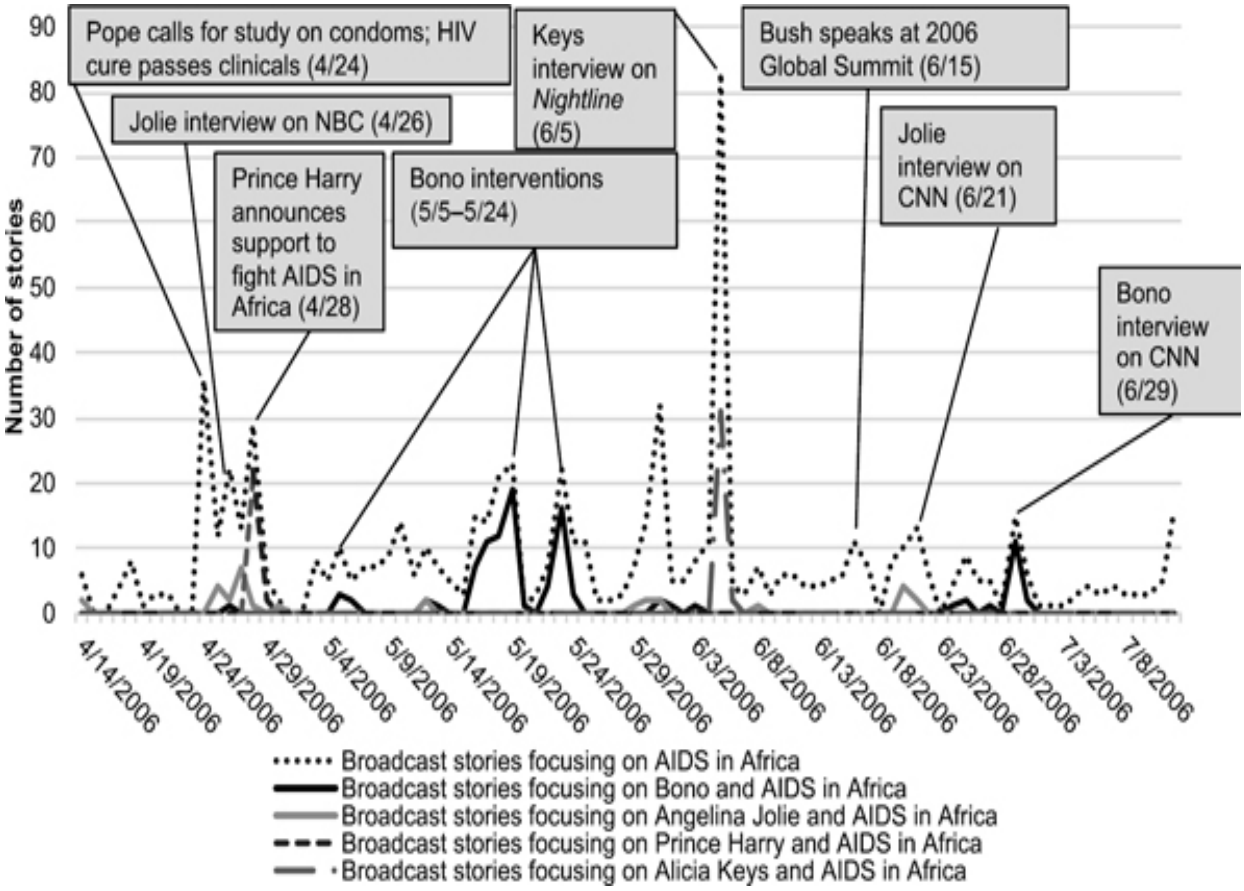


Figure 3.6 Broadcast News Coverage of AIDS in Africa by Various Celebrities

As previously mentioned, Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt went to Namibia for the birth of their child, and Jolie made statements about education in Africa. As part of her April 26 NBC interview, she also discussed the issue of AIDS in Africa. Two days later, Great Britain's Prince Harry announced an initiative to fight AIDS in Africa on April 28. Both interventions visibly coincide with a spike in news coverage in which Jolie and Prince Harry are mentioned in stories about AIDS. These spikes only appear in broadcast news, not in U.S. or UK newspaper coverage.

Bono also engaged in a series of events to increase global awareness of AIDS in Africa, roughly from April 29 through May 29, 2006. One is a speech on AIDS and development before the World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth on May 5. On May 15 he met with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown to discuss the global AIDS pandemic and to interview them for a special issue of the *Independent.* This issue was released on May 16 with Bono as guest editor. On the day of publication, Bono departed for a tour of Africa, accompanied by Brian Williams of NBC, which resulted in Williams hosting the NBC evening news from Africa with Bono at his side.

Between May 29 and June 12, 2006, media coverage of AIDS climaxed as the twenty-fifth anniversary of the discovery of the disease approached, particularly on June 5, the actual anniversary. Nevertheless, the focus on AIDS in Africa alone was dominated by an ABC-TV *Nightline* episode focusing on Alicia Keys and her work to raise awareness and raise money. As illustrated in table 3.1, thirty-one out of eighty-three broadcast stories made reference to Alicia Keys in the *Nightline* interview. An additional push to maintain media coverage of AIDS in Africa came from Bono and Angelina Jolie's interviews between June 13 and July 6, 2006. Again, strong spikes in broadcast media coverage were associated with interventions from these celebrities.

Celebrities commanded a significant amount of attention in the broadcast media. Their interventions significantly increased the coverage of AIDS in Africa, with Alicia Keys and Prince Harry producing the strongest celebrity effects. Pope Benedict also produced a significant and unsurprising bump in coverage.[8] In comparison, Bush's speech at the global summit did not register an increase in stories in broadcast news or newspaper coverage. However, Bono's interventions were significant across all three media forms, suggesting that Bono may have relatively more credibility among print media than some other celebrities do.

In spring of 2010, Bono and Bob Geldof attempted to raise the profile of problems with development in Africa, particularly focusing on the indebtedness of governments and the spread of AIDS. Bono published an editorial in the *New York Times* on April 8, which received some media attention beyond the newspaper itself. On April 30, Bono met with Barack Obama to discuss development issues in Africa. The most striking result of Bono and Geldof's intervention was in Canadian newspaper coverage. On May 10 Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, one of the newspapers with the highest

circulation in Canada, allowed Bono and Geldof to take over the editorial reins of their publication for the day. With these two rock musicians in charge, they could write articles, choose content, and interview anyone they wanted. Given control over a major Canadian newspaper, they were, to some extent, able to drive the agenda of the Canadian media for the day.

Figure 3.7 illustrates stories about AIDS and debt in Africa that were written in direct reference to Bono. The dotted line illustrates a corresponding spike in overall stories on AIDS and debt in Africa occurring on the same day in four Canadian newspapers. Compared with the intervention of other actors on this issue, Geldof and Bono's editorship clearly produced the biggest spike.

Bono and Geldof's editorship yielded 20 stories compared with the 2.22 stories generated on any other day on this issue. Bono and Geldof controlling a newspaper for one issue simultaneously increased the coverage of that issue among other Canadian newspapers. The Bono and Obama meeting also received attention and generated roughly six stories on the day of that event.[9] U.S. newspaper coverage was not affected by these events, and broadcast news paid more attention to Congress's statements about debt and AIDS in Africa than to the celebrities' activities.

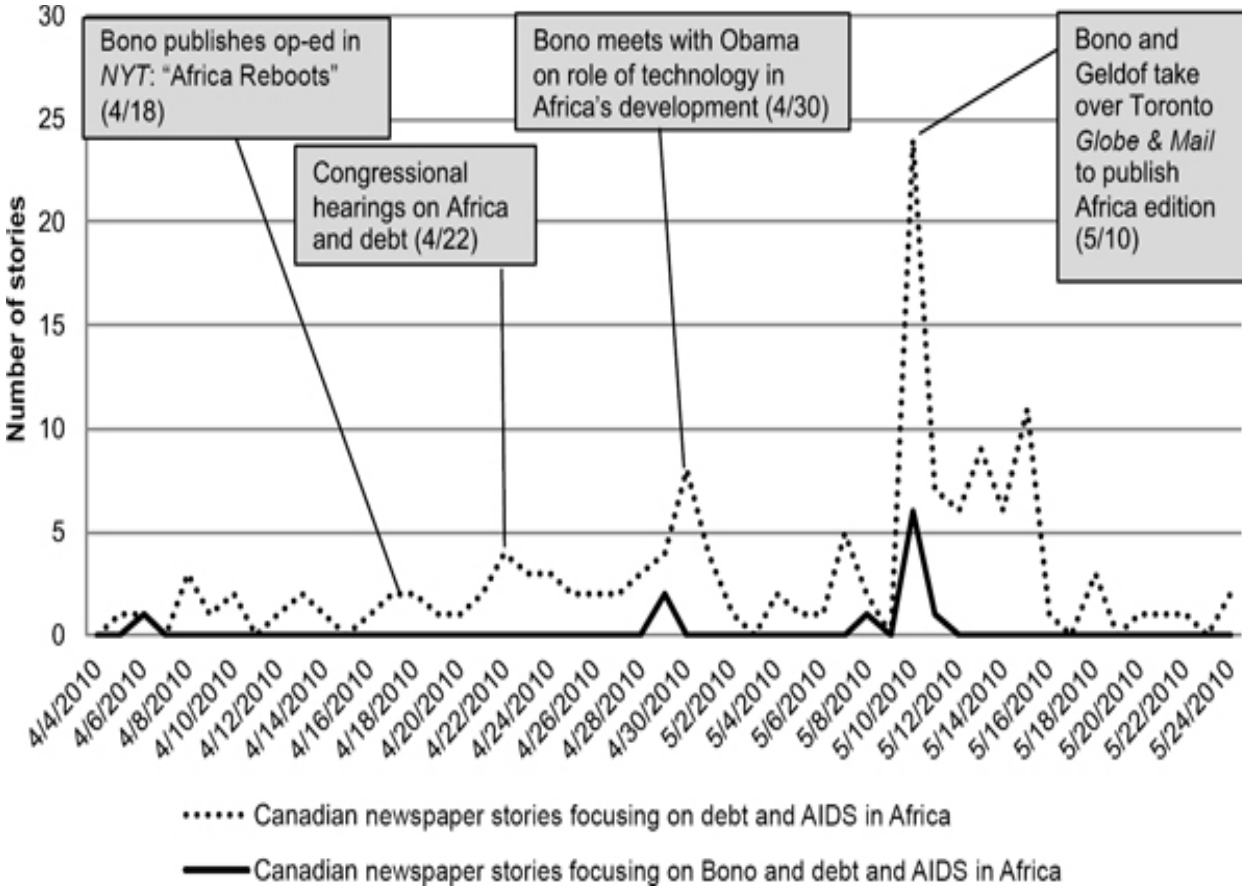


Figure 3.7 Canadian Newspaper Coverage of Debt and AIDS by Bono and Geldof

Bono may not have been uniformly effective at commanding media attention and did not always win battles over short-term allocations, but he did play a role in the policy process. Billions of dollars were pledged in debt relief by the world's most powerful leaders, and $18.8 billion were spent fighting AIDS—a larger amount than was originally pledged—between fiscal years 2004 and 2008, suggesting that increased discussion of the issue over time was related to a positive outcome (Itano 2008). In this case, the Bush administration and Bono were pushing for a similar result. The differences were about the method and scope of delivery.

Bush and Bono's working relationship deepened over time. On Comedy Central's *Daily Show* in 2012, Bono said that Bush did an "amazing" job in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa (Hughes 2013). Of Bono, Bush said, "He was skeptical of me and frankly I was skeptical of him. And we became pals because we shared a common desire to help others on the continent of Africa. Bono's the real deal." Bush reiterated this sentiment

years later when Bono visited the former president at his ranch in Texas in 2017 (Beavers 2017; Glueck 2013).

CELEBRITIES AND POLITICIANS IN THE MEDIA: A WIN-LOSS ANALYSIS

Thus far, this chapter has concluded that celebrities are highly successful at commanding media attention, which goes a long way toward establishing that celebrities may be able to set agendas, at least in the media. Bono's involvement in debt relief and AIDS, however, is instructive. It reminds us that celebrities still play an outsider's game for the most part, with occasional access to public officials, and that politicians set agendas for a living. Who is better at spotlighting? Might the answer vary across media types? Ultimately, answers to questions across cases are best answered by analyzing aggregate data.

Table 3.1 displays a summary of political actors' win-loss records. In this data-set, politicians and celebrities had 123 "intervention opportunities," or chances to increase media exposure on an issue. Each political actor had the opportunity to "win" or "lose" in a given intervention, whether they were the sole "star" or appeared with other celebrities and/or politicians. A "win" was counted as an intervention where the politician or celebrity caused a visible spike on the table and where the relationship between the intervention and the spike in coverage was statistically significant. A "loss" occurred when the politician or celebrity produced no discernable improvement in media coverage.[10]

Overall, celebrities are the big "winners." Celebrities have better records than politicians across all media types. That is, within the periods selected for analysis, celebrities get more press coverage on political issues than politicians do. In the "total wins" category, the top winning percentage is George Clooney's 56 percent, followed by Bono at 51 percent—both positive results in a media environment where victory is attention and defeat is ignorance. Clooney scores 22 percent of the time in newspapers and 89 percent of the time in the broadcast media. Bono tops newspaper coverage with 38 percent, but still scores higher in broadcast media with 48 percent. Clooney and Jolie perform better in broadcast media than Obama or

Congress or Bush. Bono, Clooney, and Jolie perform better than the same political figures in newspaper media.

The win-loss records illustrate a high rate of success for celebrities. How do politicians and celebrities compare across media types? At the outset, one might assume that the serious and event-driven nature of newspapers would make them less likely to be susceptible to celebrity interventions than in broadcast media, and that broadcast media would be more likely to follow the personalities and images associated with celebrity. Indeed, a comparison of the win-loss record of political actors in broadcast media versus U.S. newspapers reveals that most interventions have a 40 percent or higher success rate in broadcast media and lower than 40 percent in U.S. newspapers. This suggests that public figures in general have an easier time gaining attention in the broadcast media and a more difficult time in newspapers. With celebrities on top of broadcast and newspaper lists, celebrities are more likely to have successful interventions than politicians.[11] Finally, the more celebrities involved in an intervention, the more likely they are to create a spike in coverage in both broadcast media and in U.S. newspaper coverage. More politicians do not inspire more coverage.[12]

Table 3.1Political Actors' "Win-Loss" Records

	N	Wins	Win-loss percentage
Wins in broadcast transcripts			
George Clooney	18	16	88.89
Angelina Jolie	6	5	83.33
Barack Obama	9	6	66.67
U.S. Congress	6	3	50.00
Bono	21	10	47.62
George W. Bush	10	4	40.00
Wins in U.S. newspapers			
Bono	21	8	38.10
George Clooney	18	4	22.22
Angelina Jolie	6	1	16.67
U.S. Congress	6	1	16.67
Barack Obama	9	1	11.11
George W. Bush	10	0	0.00
Total wins across all cases			
George Clooney	36	20	55.56
Bono	53	27	50.94
Barack Obama	19	**7**	36.84

Angelina Jolie	17	7	41.18
U.S. Congress	14	4	28.57
George W. Bush	22	4	18.18

CELEBRITY COLOR: WHY BUSH NEEDS BONO

It is already clear why Bono would seek out George W. Bush. Bono wanted to be able to convince Bush personally of the validity of his argument and to be friendly with Condoleezza Rice and others so he could have ongoing access to these leaders. However, he also wanted to give the likes of Jamie Drummond and Jeffrey Sachs access to policymakers and bureaucrats so that they could influence the entire policymaking process. The data in this chapter offer a reason why George W. Bush might want or need Bono.

According to the data presented in this chapter, celebrity interventions are more likely to produce media coverage than politician interventions across media types, and more celebrities might increase the effect. That politicians have a difficult time producing spikes in both media markets is surprising. Politicians communicate through the mass media daily. One might assume that democratically elected public officials should be able to produce a bigger spike than anyone else.

The president of the United States, arguably the most powerful political figure in the world, presumably should produce the biggest spikes of all (Kernell 1997). In some cases, such as when Bush went on a public relations offensive leading up to a UN meeting, the president and other public officials dominated media coverage. With his bully pulpit, the president commanded a great deal of attention. Of course, this may not have been the best case to illustrate celebrity spotlighting. Bush and Bono were already "pulling in the same direction," so to speak. Both wanted to raise awareness on this issue. Bono's intervention in this case appeared to be more of an insider strategy. He wanted Bush to "stay the course" and maintain his pledge of $3 billion, and he argued with him in private about it. Whatever Bono's intent, Bush drove the public agenda in that case.

Still, it is difficult even for presidents to compete with celebrities for attention. It is easy to forget that the president—like other politicians—makes many statements.[13] Some statements are flashy and exciting and relate directly to issues that concern the public. Others are ordinary and easily forgotten. A president's ability to generate interest, or to distract from

problematic issues, is limited, and he sometimes fails. Even if a president thinks an issue is globally important, the issue may not resonate with the public or the media's idea of what makes a good enough story to sell more units. After all, as chapter 2 reminds us, media organizations are also businesses (Kuypers 2014). Ideally, an individual editor's first commitment may be providing quality and accurate news. However, which stories, how many stories, and how prominent the stories appear may be a factor of not only how "big" the story is but also how the story might lead to higher circulation and greater sales and advertising revenue (Bennett 2012; Cook 2005; Epstein 1973; Jowell et al. 2007; Lim 2012; J. C. Turner 1987). If this is the case, in the eyes of many editors, politicians may just be "business as usual." Perhaps the story is better told by coloring coverage with an agitating celebrity. Broadcast news, which is more reliant on visuals and sound bites for increased entertainment value, may be more likely to desire magnetic personalities to provide content and contextualize stories (Cook 2005; Kazin, Edwards, and Rothman 2011, 401). Still, with hundreds of options to use as "talking heads," politicians are in high supply and part of the routine of newsmaking, even in broadcast news. Celebrities add color.

Likewise, if a politician wants to stand out, she may place herself next to a talking head that is lower in supply and higher in demand—a celebrity touting an issue that appeals to the politician. A celebrity advocating on behalf of a public issue is a rarer commodity—far from business as usual. As a matter of routine, celebrities are likely to gain media attention for their latest movie, album, or sporting victory—or for getting into trouble. When celebrities advocate on political issues, they utilize the skills and resources that made them popular entertainers. Through celebrity activism, public policy advocacy marries the theater. The media use celebrities as a visual aid to cover an issue rather than using them to focus upon the celebrity's latest movie, album, or sporting event. In these cases, entertainment may not be news, but the news is entertaining.

The data are consistent with this conclusion. A celebrity does not need legitimate power to gain media attention. Indeed, celebrities may be the "draw" and politicians the beneficiary when they appear together. Through the celebrity, a politician gains special attention from the media. If the celebrity plays the game right and coordinates well with her advocacy network, the celebrity may not only gain access to lobby high-profile decision makers; she may also create an opening for her affiliated activists to

become intimately involved in the policy process. In this way, the politician and the celebrity help each other and complement each other.

The ranking of celebrities on each list might also provide some insights about why some interventions work and some do not. Bono is more successful in the traditional print media. This may be because he is a policy insider, given his long track record of lobbying Congress, meeting presidents, attending G8 summits, and involving himself in detailed facets of the policymaking process. In broadcast transcripts, Clooney and Jolie are at the top of the list. One reason why may be implied in a statement Clooney made about the media's coverage and the American public's response to the Darfur crisis:

> The unfortunate truth of it is it's not somehow sexy enough news and it's hard. It's hard to look at, and after a while people don't want to see it. And there's a lot of, I think, wear and tear on people seeing a lot of tragedy. But while we don't pay attention to it and sort of shut our eyes, there's an awful lot of killing going on, an awful lot of rape going on. Here's the thing: We always see this now. We have tragedy fatigue on television. Every day, twenty kids [are] killed in Iraq or, you know, there's always disaster (Clooney 2006).

People may experience politician or celebrity fatigue when they are overexposed to a public figure (Roy 2012). They may also experience tragedy fatigue (Acampora and Cotten 2008, xi; Associated Press 2008). However, perhaps the "sexy" part is the key to understanding the role of actors like Clooney and Jolie in broadcast media, a variable that is not lost on the advertising literature (Berscheid and Walster 1974; McGuire 1985).

Clooney implicitly affirms Paul Watson's argument from chapter 2 that sex or celebrity, along with scandal and violence, drive—or at least color—news coverage. Even given newspapers' proclivity toward celebrity coverage, sexiness and celebrity clearly sell across media sources. Perhaps Bo Derek was needed to get people to pay attention to endangered wolf populations. Perhaps there is no other way to make genocide in Darfur "sexy" than to put George Clooney's face on it. Perhaps NPR makes a crisis in the Congo sexy by getting Ben Affleck—or Batman—to talk about it. As indicated above, the pursuit of sound bites to make news more entertaining leads journalists to more attractive talking heads. Jolie and Clooney may have a degree of credibility, but if they also exude "sexiness," why not

privilege their profiles over that of an aging rocker like Bono, or a stock photo of lesser known politicians?

"CLOONEY, SENATORS URGE ACTION ON DARFUR"

This chapter provided answers to questions about whether celebrities could influence the mainstream media to increase coverage on political issues, and how their efforts compare with politicians'. The data suggest that if activists like Prendergast want to draw attention to a political issue, they would be wise to recruit celebrity spokespeople. Ultimately, it is possible for celebrities to produce visible spikes in coverage in broadcast news and newspaper coverage, affirming Watson's anecdotal assertion that celebrity is one of four crucial elements that may increase the likelihood and length of media coverage. It may be more difficult for both to penetrate newspapers and more likely for celebrities to be successful in both. Indeed, more celebrities may lead to more coverage.

Contrary to expectations, politicians may gain an advantage by allying with celebrities to advance their agenda or burnish their image on particular issues. A headline from CNN (that sounds like it was drawn from *The Daily Show* or *The Onion)* highlights this ultimate implication: "Clooney, senators urge action on Darfur." Clooney was the headliner. Senators in attendance included Sam Brownback and Barack Obama (CNN 2006). Barack Obama may have become the president of the United States, but when he was a well-known senator, he was Clooney's sidekick on CNN. Perhaps Jon Stewart was right. Perhaps George Clooney is "the most powerful man in the free world" (Stewart 2012).

This combination of celebrity and politics might well have been a defining factor in candidate Trump's extensive free media coverage during the 2016 presidential campaign. Trump was colorful and commanded headlines. Jeff Zucker, head of CNN and the person who signed Donald Trump to host *The Apprentice* on NBC, said, "We recognized . . . there was a little bit of a phenomenon to Donald Trump" and that he was a "ratings machine," so "we did give him quite a bit of coverage." Zucker also argued that if he had it to do over again, CNN would have offered "less unfiltered nonstop streaming of Trump's early rallies" (Gold 2016). Still, the very factor that created headlines for Trump during the campaign is a source of power that Trump

brings into the presidency—a power that is not inherent to the constitutional office. Granted, Trump has made many missteps in the organization of his administration and execution of public policymaking. However, one could argue that with fewer missteps, this combination of celebrity influence and public office might truly have made him "the most powerful man in the free world."

Being famous may be necessary to reach a broad audience, but fame and attention do not necessarily equate to credibility or results. For example, George Clooney appears to be quite credible when discussing Sudan. On the other hand, basketball star Dennis Rodman's statements that Kim Jong-un is an "awesome guy" and that his father and grandfather were "great leaders" illustrates how a celebrity's personal statements and experiences may undermine his credibility with the public ("Basketball Star Dennis Rodman" 2013). Perhaps his close relationship with Donald Trump will grant him more credibility with the North Korean leader as he engages in a sort of renegade celebrity diplomacy (Berlinger 2017). Does the perceived credibility of a celebrity matter? Is credibility or success somehow linked to the celebrity's abilities? These questions will be the subject of the next chapter. If celebrities are perceived as credible when they command attention, it may not only explain why news organizations may gravitate toward them. It may also offer some evidence that at least some celebrities are taken seriously when they command media attention.

4. Blithering Idiots and Total Losers: Are Celebrities Credible?

In 1976 Bob Marley, the poor, mixed-race Jamaican who had become an international reggae star, wanted to thank the people of Jamaica for their support by giving a free concert with other members of the original Wailers and other musical acts at Kingston's National Heroes Park. He called the show "Smile Jamaica," a political theme intended to bring a spirit of peace during a violent time (Moskowitz 2007b, 71). Factions loyal to Jamaican prime minister Michael Manley of the People's National Party (PNP), on one side, and opposition leader Edward Seaga of the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), on the other, had been fighting over the political future of the country. Rival gangs affiliated with those political parties engaged in gun battles that erupted periodically for many years. Manley had declared a state of emergency, and hundreds were detained without charge. Many of those who were detained were high-profile members of the JLP, accused of planning to overthrow the government, and the JLP was receiving CIA support (V. Goldman 2006; "Jamaica" 1974; K. F. Williams 2011).

When these political leaders became aware of the plan for a free concert, they approached Marley separately, seeking his endorsement. Marley had performed at rallies supporting Manley from the late 1960s through 1972, and he accepted the government's support in organizing this large-scale event, but insisted that this would be a nonaligned concert. Behind the scenes, Marley was angered when Manley opportunistically moved up the date of the election to coincide with the show. This move, along with the government's support and Marley's former backing of Manley, compromised his image with members of the JLP. Marley defended his motives:

> People work for money, den dem don't want to split it. It's that kind of attitude. So much guys have so much—too much—while so many have nothing at all. We don't feel like that is right, because it don't take a

> guy a hundred million dollars to keep him satisfied. Everybody have to live. Michael Manley say 'im wan' help poor people. . . . They feel something good is gonna happen. We need a change from what it was. It couldn't get worse than that. You have to share. I don't care if it sounds political or whatever it is, but people have to share (V. Goldman 2006).

Tensions mounted. Marley used his home as a "safe house" or neutral zone where people from warring factions could come together, talk, and find peace. During a rehearsal at the house, two days before the event, six gunmen attacked Marley and his band. Marley was shot in the elbow and chest, his wife was shot in the head, and their manager was shot four times in the groin (Crowe 1977; Denselow 2011; V. Goldman 2006; Henke 2006, 43; Moskowitz 2007a, 2007b, 72). Despite their injuries, Marley and his wife appeared at the show and played a ninety-minute set, insisting that they could not be absent because "the people who are making this world worse are not taking a day off" (Cooke 2015). However, for the next two years, Marley remained in exile in Nassau and London.

In 1978, gunmen from opposing political factions united to organize another free show. The purpose of this "One Love Peace Concert" was to celebrate the uneasy cease-fire between warring gangs and the twelfth anniversary of the visit of Ethiopian leader Haile Selassie, who was considered divine by Rastafarians. The groups invited Marley to return to Jamaica for this event, and he agreed. Political rivals Manley and Seaga were also invited and attended the show. At the climax of the performance, Marley called Manley and Seaga on stage, saying, "I just wanna shake hands and show the people that we're gonna unite." They came up and shook hands while rival gang leaders embraced (Boot and Goldman 1981; Denselow 2011; Moskowitz 2007a). Unfortunately, this effort did not quell the violence between gangs. Marley died of cancer in 1981, and his funeral brought the two opponents together again for a moment of remembrance (Henke 2006). Marley was a transformative figure for his country, a public figure with profound credibility across the Jamaican political spectrum.

This story suggests an implicit hypothesis: that Bob Marley, a performer, may have had a level of political credibility that rivaled or exceeded that of Michael Manley and Edward Seaga. For simplicity, I will refer to this as the celebrity primacy hypothesis. Manley was credible enough to receive PNP support and to serve as prime minister from 1972 to 1980 and again from

1989 to 1992. Likewise, Seaga was credible among JLP supporters, succeeding Manley as prime minister in 1980. However, while Manley and Seaga were legitimately powerful by virtue of their political positions and credible based upon their experience in government, they also were complicit in Jamaica's atmosphere of violence. Both sides were willing to blame the other for Jamaica's problems. As an artist and a wounded victim, Marley became a symbol of hope for peace. In this way, Marley was able to engage in political theater that was unthinkable two years earlier—a theater that brought together two antagonistic leaders.

Until the emergence of a literature on popular culture and celebrity politics in recent years, this hypothesis might not have been taken seriously. Indeed, the idea of celebrity political credibility and influence was so laughable that the subject had only been pondered by a few political science scholars.[1] Larry Sabato, Robert Kent Gooch Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia and director of its Center for Politics, cynically suggests that celebrities have little impact on the political process:

> My take on celebrity endorsements is that the only weak minds they can sway are fortunately not registered voters, or they don't show up at the polls. Very few Americans are empty vessels into which celebrities or the media can pour opinions. . . . Celebrities don't sway any voters with substantial gray matter. I mean, who would vote for someone because Ben Affleck is for them? They'd have to be a blithering idiot. Generally, the blithering idiots are in the movie theaters on Election Day. . . . Celebrities? Most of them couldn't get their spouses to endorse their choice. This is of great fascination to readers of *Variety* and not to any real people—thank goodness (Ross 2004).

Until recently, most academics would likely agree. Celebrities—in short—cannot be credible. Only idiots would listen to them. No one should take Ben Affleck seriously just because he has an opinion.[2] Perhaps today Sabato would argue that the blithering idiots came out of the movie theaters on Election Day 2016 because the Electoral College elected a celebrity as president of the United States.

Granted, we must avoid oversimplifying Sabato's statement. However, his argument is reasonable because it represents status quo assumptions about what kinds of actors are credible in the political system (Key 1968).[3] If we

take his implication seriously, that celebrities have little or no real credibility, we should expect an intelligent and informed public to view politicians as more credible than celebrities, at least concerning issues of public importance. This could be referred to as a politician primacy hypothesis. To validate this hypothesis, we would gather data and see a clear and statistically significant ranking of celebrities and politicians on a credibility continuum. Respondents would consistently rank politicians as significantly more credible than celebrities. Hypothetically, Seaga and Manley should be at the top of the list and Marley should be at the bottom.

We do not have data on Manley, Seaga, or Marley's perceived credibility between 1976 and 1978. However, this chapter will analyze survey data to determine how respondents perceive the credibility of current American political leaders and international celebrities across several issue areas and explore sources of celebrity credibility. If the data demonstrate that there is no significant difference between the credibility of politicians and celebrities, we must reject the presumption that celebrities have less perceived credibility than politicians do. This analysis gives rise to additional questions. How do partisans rank the credibility of their own politicians versus celebrities? What factors may account for the perceived credibility of these actors? Why do some of these actors outperform others? In addition, how does someone like Donald Trump—part politician, part celebrity—compare?

THE CREDIBILITY SURVEY

The data for this chapter were derived from surveys administered in the summer of 2013 and during the weeks directly prior to the 2016 presidential election. In the 2013 survey, 177 people were asked about the credibility of celebrities and politicians. In 2016, 301 respondents were surveyed.

The purpose of surveying over two periods was threefold. First, the original intention of the survey was to compare the credibility of celebrities and politicians, irrespective of characteristics such as party identification. However, as I examined the data, I discovered interesting differences between the way that Republicans, Democrats, and independents or nonpartisans responded to celebrities and politicians. While the results were significant, the datasets were small. I wanted to see if I could replicate the

same results using a larger dataset. Second, I thought that comparing most of the same figures during an election might produce different results. Would people perceive Clinton and Obama as more or less credible in the context of an intense and negative election? Finally, I could not avoid the temptation to gather people's perceptions on Trump, a celebrity turned politician and the Republicans' nominee for president.

When conducting the survey, respondents were asked whether they recognized the public figure. If they did, their responses were tabulated. If they did not, their responses were discarded. They were then asked (on a 1–5 Likert scale) whether they believed that a particular "public figure" was a "credible spokesperson" on nine political issues: U.S. support to combat AIDS in the developing world, environmental protection, gun control, the genocide in Darfur, genetic testing for cancer, military intervention in Syria, income inequality, marijuana legalization, and same-sex marriage. Credibility, in this case, was matched to an issue, in order to accommodate the possibility that a politician might be seen as very credible on one issue and less credible on another. For example, Marco Rubio might be seen as more credible on gun control than on same-sex marriage. Likewise, celebrities often pour their efforts behind a single issue, so it makes sense that George Clooney might be credible on genocide, because that is an area where he has experience in advocacy, but might not be credible on the Syrian civil war, where he does not.

Ten celebrities were chosen as "endorsers" on these issues. Some celebrities were perceived to be quite liberal, some quite conservative, and some hard to tell. All of the celebrities have been involved in advocating a real political issue or candidate or were at the center of some real political controversy, heightening the public's awareness of their political relevance to an issue. Some of the celebrities were matched with issues where they are truly involved and their positions are generally known, such as Elton John and Ellen DeGeneres on AIDS; Robert Redford on environmental protection; Angelina Jolie on genetic testing for breast cancer; Willie Nelson on marijuana legalization; and Ellen DeGeneres, Elton John, and Lady Gaga on same-sex marriage. Others were fictitiously matched with issues where celebrities have not made a clear position known or on issues where there was no known celebrity advocacy. For example, George Clooney and Angelina Jolie were assigned to the civil war in Syria because they were high-profile advocates on other international issues, even though they did not have a known position on that conflict. Bruce Springsteen and Clint

Eastwood were iconic choices on gun control, although their real positions on these issues were not well known (Eastwood 2000). Tim Tebow had not made any specific public statements on same-sex marriage at the time of the survey, but was assigned to that issue because the conservative Christian community views him favorably, and he was the focus of some controversy on this issue around the time of the survey. Faithful America, a grassroots Christian social justice organization, and LGBT activists attempted to publicly pressure Tebow to cancel a speech at Liberty University, a conservative Christian university that has been traditionally hostile to the LGBT community (Bennett-Smith 2013; Starnes 2013).

In addition to the twelve celebrities, four politicians were selected for comparison in 2013: President Barack Obama, former Secretary of State and Senator Hillary Clinton, Speaker of the House John Boehner, and Senator Marco Rubio. Obama and Boehner were chosen because they were the top-ranked and most visible representatives of their political parties at the time. Clinton and Rubio were chosen for their potential electability. In 2013 Clinton was the likely front-runner among Democrats for 2016. Rubio had just given the Republican response to the State of the Union and was ranked highly in terms of name identification among possible Republican front-runners in the 2016 presidential election.

Three years is an eternity in politics. Clinton's ascension as the standard-bearer for Democrats in 2016 was anticipated, although her intense battle with Bernie Sanders was not. Few could have predicted Obama's soaring popularity by the end of 2016 or that Boehner would resign in 2015 and be replaced by Paul Ryan. In 2013, Rubio looked like a serious contender for the Republican presidential nomination. No one could have expected that reality show television star Donald Trump—a businessman with no prior experience in public office—would be insulting and derailing "Little Marco" on the trail to a successful presidential nomination. Because of these changes, Boehner was dropped from the 2016 survey and replaced by Trump. While Rubio did not earn the Republican nomination for president, his profile increased substantially because of his presidential run, and leaving him in the survey provided the opportunity to have some continuity on the Republican side between 2013 and 2016. Thus, Rubio, Clinton, and Obama remained in the survey. In both 2013 and 2016, respondents were asked whether the public official in question was perceived as credible on the thirteen issues covered by this study. In this way, Barack Obama's or

John Boehner’s credibility could be compared directly with Ellen DeGeneres’s or George Clooney’s on several public policy issues.[4]

THE CASE FOR POLITICIAN PRIMACY

As mentioned above, if we accept the presumption that politicians should generally be more credible than celebrities, data from the survey should support that contention. Presidents and politicians should top the list, and celebrities should be at the bottom. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 report the results.

Table 4.1 nominally supports the politician primacy hypothesis. In this summary, those public figures who were ranked as most credible, based on averages reported by respondents, are at the top of the list. Those less credible are at the bottom. Each list is divided by issue area, with 2013 results on the left and 2016 results on the right.

The 2013 results consistently reinforce the order suggested by the politician primacy hypothesis. Across all surveys, President Obama places either first or second in every category. In 2013, Clinton tops nearly every category, with the exception of Obama as being most credible on gun control. Although Clinton and Obama top the lists, Boehner and Rubio generally appear to be more credible than celebrities on income inequality and gun control. The exception is environmental protection, where in 2013 and 2016 Robert Redford appears to be less credible than the Democratic politicians but more so than the Republicans.

The 2016 results display some differences. Celebrities do not occupy the bottom position in all of these lists. Clooney appears to be second to Obama on the issue of genocide in Darfur. It is also possible that events over the previous three years affected the perception of some of these figures. Consider Clint Eastwood. In 2012 he gave the worst political performance of his career, a speech at the Republican National Convention where he debated an imaginary President Obama, represented by an empty chair. By 2016 the sample—which is skewed young—may well have forgotten this performance in favor of his more memorable films. Thus, his credibility is generally higher in 2016 than 2012. Rubio gave a similarly ignominious speech as the official Republican State of the Union response to President Obama in 2013. Under hot lamps, he was sweaty, nervous, and parched, and desperately reached off screen for a bottle of water at one point, reinforcing

his lack of confidence and drawing criticism and ridicule (Crouch 2013). By 2016, he was a serious contender for the Republican presidential nomination, and that water moment was almost forgotten until Trump lampooned Rubio by purposely spraying a water bottle during a campaign event (Berenson 2016). Nevertheless, Rubio improved his popularity and standing even after his unsuccessful bid, and it may be reflected in higher credibility numbers in 2016.

Table 4.1 High Credibility Means for Politicians

	2013				2016			
Issue	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD
Income inequality	Clinton	42	3.29	1.04	Obama	68	3.46	1.1(
	Obama	47	3.21	1.61	Clinton	72	3.07	1.14
	Rubio	40	2.63	1.25	Rubio	72	3.03	0.77
	Boehner	43	2.56	1.05	Springsteen	57	2.91	0.6(
	Springsteen	38	2.47	0.95	Trump	72	2.25	1.14
		210				**341**		
Gun control	Obama	57	3.07	1.51	Obama	68	3.31	1.2(
	Boehner	43	3.00	1.11	Eastwood	73	3.26	0.9(
	Clinton	42	3.00	1.21	Rubio	72	3.04	0.81
	Rubio	44	2.55	1.35	Trump	74	2.96	1.33
	Eastwood	45	2.38	1.05	Clinton	74	2.91	1.14
	Springsteen	47	2.36	0.82	Springsteen	57	2.91	0.74
		278				**418**		
Genocide in Darfur	Clinton	42	3.48	0.97	Obama	68	3.44	0.8(
	Obama	50	3.02	1.22	Clooney	64	2.94	0.71
	Clooney	50	2.74	0.80	Rubio	71	2.85	0.67
	Boehner	43	2.61	0.93	Clinton	71	2.79	0.9(
	Rubio	43	2.37	0.98	Trump	71	2.62	0.9(
		228				**345**		
Environmental protection	Clinton	42	3.45	1.02	Obama	66	3.71	0.8(
	Obama	47	3.02	1.33	Clinton	71	3.28	0.8(
	Redford	40	2.98	1.12	Redford	47	3.02	0.6(
	Boehner	42	2.48	0.97	Rubio	71	2.96	0.6(
	Rubio	40	2.45	1.11	Trump	72	2.35	1.01
		211				**327**		

Note: Numbers in bold represent totals.

Even Clinton and Obama experienced changes in credibility between the two samples. In the summer of 2013, Clinton was more popular than Obama in some polls, having recently retired as secretary of state. In late October and early November 2016, Clinton was fighting a tight and negative campaign against Trump, and they were the least popular candidates in U.S. history going into the general election. Clinton had a 52 percent unfavorable rating, and Trump's was 61 percent (Saad 2016). Obama, on the other hand, was approaching a 60 percent approval rating, among the most popular of all presidents at the end of a term. Overall, based on the results of table 4.1 alone, we may conclude that celebrities are not more credible than politicians. However, a deeper analysis yields a more complex picture.

For example, looking at the results on the gun control issue in 2013, the mean scores for Obama, Boehner, Clinton, and Rubio are within hundredths of points apart, suggesting that there is not much real difference between these politicians' credibility on this issue. There is a much larger gap between Rubio and the celebrities lower on the list than there is between Rubio and any of the politicians. In other words, on any given day, with any other sample, it may be just as likely that Rubio would top the list as would President Obama. For this reason, statistical tests may reveal whether there is a significant difference between the public figures on the list.[5] If there is, it offers additional support to the rank orders listed above.

Further analysis of the income inequality category reveals that Clinton's mean rank is significantly higher than both Boehner's and Springsteen's in the 2013 set, but not the other politicians, a clear demonstration that one politician (Hillary Clinton) is more credible than one celebrity (Bruce Springsteen) on this issue. The muddier result is that Springsteen's rank is statistically comparable to any of the other politicians, besides Clinton, suggesting that he potentially had as much credibility on the issue of income inequality as Boehner, Rubio, or even President Obama in 2013. The 2016 results are different. Obama's mean rank is significantly higher than Springsteen's and Trump's. However, every person's credibility score on the list is significantly higher than Trump's, even Springsteen's. If we count Trump as a celebrity, politician primacy is confirmed. Springsteen is only more credible than another celebrity, but not Obama. However, as in the 2013 results, Springsteen's credibility score is indistinguishable from Clinton's or Rubio's.[6] So while the popular president of the United States

had more credibility than both celebrities, Springsteen was comparably credible to all of the other politicians on the list.

On gun control, the 2013 results revealed that Obama and Boehner were both more credible than Springsteen, again a finding consistent with the income inequality case. However, as in the previous case, Springsteen's credibility is indistinguishable from Clinton's, Eastwood's, or Rubio's. The 2016 results were close enough that the results were completely indistinguishable.[7] Thus we cannot prove that Obama's credibility score is statistically any different from Springsteen's.

On the issue of genocide in Darfur, the 2013 results demonstrate that Clinton was more credible than anyone else except for Obama. Obama was only more credible than Rubio. Clooney's credibility was statistically comparable to Boehner, Rubio, and Obama on that issue. In 2016 Obama is significantly more credible than all of the others. The others were not statistically distinct.[8]

Finally, on the issue of environmental protection, the 2013 survey results find that Clinton's credibility is greater than Boehner's and Rubio's. Robert Redford's credibility is indistinguishable from any of the others. In 2016 Obama's credibility is greater than any of the others. Every public figure's credibility is greater than Trump's.[9]

Overall, the results from table 4.1 show that in some cases, a popular politician is more credible than a celebrity. However, this was not the complete story. While Obama and Clinton's strong credibility in these issue areas supports the politician primacy hypothesis, Rubio and Boehner's weak credibility undermines it. In many cases—even with Obama and Clinton—politicians' and celebrities' credibility scores were indistinguishable.

THE CASE FOR CELEBRITY PRIMACY

While table 4.1 establishes a limited case for politician primacy, table 4.2 offers results that are more surprising: in some cases, celebrities may be perceived as more credible than politicians.

In every case, except the 2013 Syrian conflict, a celebrity tops the list. Elton John and Ellen DeGeneres have higher credibility scores on same-sex marriage and efforts to combat AIDS than most of the politicians on the list. John and DeGeneres's scores are only fractionally different between the two

samples. Obama only bypasses DeGeneres in 2016 because his credibility score increases dramatically. Angelina Jolie has more credibility than politicians on the question of genetic testing for cancer, and she even has the highest 2016 credibility score on the Syrian conflict. Willie Nelson has the highest credibility score on the issue of marijuana legalization. These results are largely consistent across samples. Nearly every celebrity's credibility score increased across those samples (including the cases in table 4.1). Otherwise, much of the movement across samples seems to be characterized by changes in the politicians' levels of credibility. Obama's and Rubio's scores rise and Clinton's scores decline between 2013 and 2016, just as they did in the other cases.

Table 4.2 High Credibility Means for Celebrities

	2013				2016			
Issue	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD
AIDS	John	44	3.77	1.14	John	81	3.80	0.9
	DeGeneres	41	3.46	0.93	Obama	67	3.52	0.9
	Clinton	42	3.21	0.95	DeGeneres	68	3.40	0.8
	Obama	57	2.96	1.07	Rubio	71	3.03	0.7
	Boehner	43	2.60	0.73	Clinton	81	2.98	0.9
	Rubio	43	2.58	0.96	Trump	81	2.27	0.8
		270				**449**		
Same-sex marriage	DeGeneres	41	3.98	0.17	DeGeneres	70	4.34	0.8
	John	41	3.73	0.14	John	81	3.99	0.8
	Obama	57	3.19	0.17	Obama	68	3.69	1.0
	Clinton	42	3.07	0.18	Gaga	70	3.27	0.9
	Gaga	41	2.66	0.20	Clinton	73	3.10	1.0
	Rubio	41	2.37	0.18	Tebow	53	2.92	1.0
	Tebow	41	2.37	0.18	Rubio	72	2.89	0.8
	Boehner	43	2.33	0.17	Trump	73	2.30	1.0
		347				**560**		
Genetic testing	Jolie	44	3.55	1.13	Jolie	61	3.61	0.1
	Clinton	41	3.07	0.96	Obama	66	3.38	0.0
	Boehner	43	2.63	0.85	Rubio	71	2.96	0.0
	Obama	47	2.62	1.09	Clinton	71	2.92	0.1
	Rubio	40	2.40	0.96	Trump	72	2.47	0.1
		215				**341**		

Marijuana legalization	Nelson	42	3.26	1.31	Nelson	73	3.92	1.0
	Clinton	42	3.05	1.08	Obama	70	3.47	0.9
	Obama	54	2.94	1.12	Rubio	71	2.85	0.6
	Boehner	43	2.58	0.88	Clinton	72	2.71	0.8
	Rubio	40	2.40	0.98	Trump	72	2.40	0.9
		221				**358**		
Syrian conflict	Clinton	42	3.29	1.02	Jolie	61	3.52	0.9
	Obama	57	3.02	1.34	Obama	68	3.44	0.8
	Boehner	43	2.81	1.01	Rubio	71	2.94	1.0
	Jolie	44	2.61	0.95	Clooney	64	2.91	0.8
	Clooney	50	2.56	0.93	Clinton	74	2.89	1.0
	Rubio	40	2.53	1.18	Trump	74	2.64	1.3
		276				**412**		

Note: Numbers in bold represent totals.

At face value, not all celebrities had comparable credibility, so these are not absolute cases for celebrity primacy. Lady Gaga, Tebow, and Clooney have weak credibility scores compared with some of the politicians. In addition, just as with most of the other cases, Trump is at the bottom of every list. However, these rankings may not be ironclad for the same reasons described above. Additional analysis is necessary to determine whether these scores are truly distinguishable.

In the 2013 sample, on the issue of federal funding for AIDS prevention, John was ranked as most credible, followed by DeGeneres and Clinton. John had a higher credibility score than Obama, Boehner, and Rubio. DeGeneres's and Clinton's scores were higher than Boehner's and Rubio's. The results of the 2016 sample were nearly the same, only Clinton's credibility had fallen and Obama's had risen. Thus, John, Obama, and DeGeneres had comparable credibility scores. John's were above those of Rubio, Clinton, and Trump. Obama's and DeGeneres's were higher than Clinton's. Trump's score was the lowest.[10]

Likewise, on the question of same-sex marriage, DeGeneres ranks significantly higher than every political actor in the sample other than John

in the 2013 sample. In 2016, only John's credibility is comparable to DeGeneres's. John's are significantly higher than all except those for DeGeneres, Obama, and Clinton in 2013 and all except those for Obama and DeGeneres in 2016. In the 2013 and 2016 samples, Gaga's means are significantly lower than DeGeneres's and John's, but indistinguishable from the other political actors. Tebow's score is at the bottom of the list, significantly lower than most of the rest in the 2013 and 2016 samples, and not statistically distinct from the Republican politicians' scores."[11]

When surveyed about the credibility of various political actors on genetic testing for cancer patients, Angelina Jolie ranks above all other political actors in credibility. In 2013, she was more credible than all except Clinton, and in 2016, she was more credible than all except Obama. Again, Trump was at the bottom of the list, ranked significantly lower than the rest.[12]

Nelson is ranked as the most credible spokesperson on the issue of marijuana legalization. In 2013 his credibility score was comparable to those of Obama and Clinton and higher than those of Boehner and Rubio. In 2016 it was comparable to Obama's but higher than those of Clinton, Rubio, and Trump.[13]

Finally, the results on the Syrian conflict issue are startling. The 2013 sample has Clinton, Obama, and Boehner as most credible. These three are not statistically distinct, so we can presume that any of them might be considered the most credible of this sample. Likewise, Clinton's credibility is significantly higher than Clooney, Jolie, and Rubio. Obama and Boehner, however, are not significantly more credible than the rest, and the remainder of the figures on the list are comparably credible. These results are not particularly surprising, and they reinforce the politician primacy hypothesis: Clinton is most credible and is above the celebrities. The 2016 sample bears a striking difference. As with the other lists, Clinton's credibility has fallen, Obama's has risen, and Trump is still the least credible. However, Jolie has risen to the top of the credibility list. When testing for statistical significance, her credibility is comparable only to Obama, and they are significantly more credible than every other figure on the list. The rest are comparably credible, which also implies that Clooney is easily as credible as Clinton, Rubio, or Trump.[14] Of course, the war in Syria is a national security issue with a broad set of associated issues—such as terrorism and refugees—that became extremely salient in the last presidential election. What is

startling is that Angelina Jolie is the only figure on the list with credibility that is comparable to President Obama on this issue of high politics.

THE CREDIBILITY OF CELEBRITIES AND POLITICIANS: A PARTISAN ANALYSIS

The previous analyses offer some intriguing insights about the relative credibility of celebrities and politicians across a general sample of respondents. One conclusion thus far is clear: people tend to believe that celebrities are just as credible as politicians—if not more so—on a variety of issues. However, Republicans do not rank high on any of the lists. This is particularly surprising, considering that Republicans form a larger than average proportion of the sample (33 percent in the sample versus 27 percent nationwide). Indeed, those surveyed across both samples were younger, whiter, more educated, and more conservative than the general population.[15] Of course, comprising only one-third of the total sample substantially dilutes our ability to see how Republicans respond to these politicians and celebrities.

It makes sense that Republicans should hypothetically rank Boehner and Rubio higher than Obama or Clinton and that Democrats should rank the Democrats as more credible than the Republicans. There may also be differences in celebrity ranking. Republicans have long been critical of Hollywood. In the words of a citizen sending a letter to the editor endorsing John McCain in 2008, Obama was “being influenced by all the Hollywood limousine elites. . . . If we want Hollywood values, we can vote for Obama” (Pulliam 2008). Might Democrats be more supportive of celebrities in general? Do Republicans disdain all celebrities? Or are certain celebrities more credible in one party than another? The purpose of this section is to identify differences in the ways that partisans rank the credibility of politicians and celebrities. Thus, this section employs the same method of analysis on the same data, but breaks down the results based on party identification.

Independents

For the purpose of this study, independents are those respondents who do not affiliate with one of the two major political parties. Some identify as adherents of minor parties such as the Libertarians or the Green Party. Others simply claim to register as independents, without identification to any particular party. So this is a catchall category where we measure the responses of "other" participants. As a result, the ideological extremes are likely broader in this group than in Republicans or Democrats. However, it is a helpful way of considering how those who do not identify themselves as major partisans perceive the credibility of mainstream politicians and celebrities across various issues.

Table 4.3 returns to the same issue set as table 4.1—the issues that seemed to make the best case for politician primacy—but breaks down the numbers exclusively for this independent/other category. The 2016 independent sample is much friendlier to Rubio than the 2013 sample, and it documents the rise in Obama's popularity and the fall in Clinton's. At face value, the independent/other subset seems to reinforce the politician primacy hypothesis. In nearly every case, politicians are ranked in the top two credibility positions across issues.

The only exception—income inequality in the 2013 sample—is that Springsteen is second most credible. However, statistical tests only reveal a significant difference between Clinton and Rubio. Springsteen may be more or less credible than any of the others. Likewise, in the 2016 sample, all that is clear is that Trump is significantly less credible than all of the others on this issue.[16] In the genocide case, the only clear determination was that Clinton was more credible than Rubio in 2013 and that Obama was more credible than Trump in 2016. Like Springsteen in the income inequality case, Clooney's credibility was indistinguishable from any of the other figures on this list.[17]

The 2013 sample placed Clinton as most credible, while the 2016 sample placed Obama as most credible on the environmental protection issue. Republicans were significantly lower than Clinton and Obama in their respective samples. Redford, placed in the middle, was no more or less credible than any of the others on the list, except Trump. Again, Trump was significantly rated as the least credible figure on environmental issues.[18] If there is one clear conclusion from these cases, it is that Trump is not credible among this sample of independents.

The gun control issue was dropped from the results, because statistical analyses concluded that none of the figures' credibility could be independently differentiated. There was no clear evidence to support the idea that Eastwood or Springsteen might be more credible than the politicians are. However, there was also no evidence to support the politician primacy hypothesis that politicians are necessarily more credible than celebrities.

Table 4.3 Independent/Other Perceptions of Credibility: Politician Primacy Cases

	2013				2016			
Issue	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD
Income inequality	Clinton	15	3.40	0.99	Obama	29	3.34	0.9
	Springsteen	12	2.83	0.83	Rubio	23	3.13	0.7
	Obama	16	2.81	1.60	Clinton	31	3.00	1.1
	Boehner	14	2.21	0.89	Springsteen	27	2.96	0.3
	Rubio	12	2.08	1.00	Trump	31	2.19	1.0
		69				**141**		
Genocide in Darfur	Clinton	15	3.27	0.88	Obama	30	3.27	0.8
	Obama	18	2.94	1.30	Rubio	23	3.00	0.6
	Clooney	17	2.77	0.66	Clooney	28	2.86	0.7
	Boehner	14	2.43	0.94	Clinton	30	2.77	0.7
	Rubio	13	2.08	1.04	Trump	30	2.50	0.7
		77				**141**		
Environmental protection	Clinton	15	3.40	0.83	Obama	28	3.64	0.7
	Obama	16	2.94	1.48	Clinton	24	3.21	0.7
	Redford	14	2.93	1.21	Redford	22	3.18	0.4
	Boehner	13	2.31	0.85	Rubio	23	3.00	0.6
	Rubio	12	2.00	0.85	Trump	24	2.29	0.9
		70				**121**		

Note: Numbers in bold represent totals.

Table 4.4 summarizes independent responses to credibility questions on those issues that supported celebrity primacy in table 4.1. On the AIDS case, John and DeGeneres were most credible. In 2013 John, DeGeneres, and Clinton were more credible than Rubio, and all three were comparably credible. In 2016 John, DeGeneres, and Obama were more credible than Clinton and Trump.[19] Likewise, on same-sex marriage, DeGeneres ranks first in credibility, but she is not statistically distinct from Gaga, John, Obama, or Clinton in the 2013 sample. DeGeneres's score is statistically distinct from Boehner's and Rubio's, so independents believe that she is more credible than the Republican politicians. Gaga's and John's means are statistically significantly distinct and more credible than Rubio's, so they, too, are more credible than Rubio. However, the 2016 results are much stronger. DeGeneres's credibility is greater than all other political actors except for John's. John's credibility is greater than that of Rubio, Tebow, and Trump. Trump has less credibility than all public figures on same-sex marriage except Tim Tebow.[20]

Among independents, Jolie's and Clinton's credibility scores are significantly higher than Rubio's on the genetic testing issue in the 2013 sample, but not significantly higher than the other public figures. In the 2016 sample, all of the public figures' credibility scores are higher than Trump's but indistinguishable from each other.[21] At best, Jolie may be more credible than any of the other political actors on this issue. At least, she is significantly more credible than Rubio and Trump.

On the question of marijuana legalization, Nelson tops the credibility lists among independents. His score is significantly higher in 2013 than all of the other political actors except for Hillary Clinton. In 2016, his credibility is even stronger.[22]

The Syrian conflict case was not included among the results of table 4.4. Although Clinton's credibility score tops the list in 2013, statistical tests could not determine any significant difference between any of the public figures' scores. The 2016 results did display significant differences between these scores, although the only significant finding is that Obama's credibility is greater than Trump's. The rest of the public figures are comparably credible. Thus, Clinton's credibility may be as great as Obama's on this

issue, or as low as Trump's, or anywhere in between. At the same time, no politician was significantly more credible than Jolie.

Democrats

Table 4.5 illustrates Democrats' perceptions of credibility across the same selected issues. When looking at the cases that seem to support the politician primacy hypothesis, a clear pattern emerges. Democrats believe that Obama and Clinton are most credible in every case and that Boehner, Rubio, and Trump are least credible in every case. Celebrities are always squarely in the middle and, in some cases, significantly more credible than Republicans.

Table 4.4 Independent/Other Perceptions of Credibility: Celebrity Primacy Cases

	2013				2016			
Issue	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD
AIDS	John	15	3.73	1.10	DeGeneres	30	3.60	0.8
	DeGeneres	14	3.29	0.61	John	27	3.56	0.9
	Clinton	15	3.20	0.77	Obama	29	3.48	0.6
	Obama	19	3.05	0.97	Rubio	23	3.00	0.6
	Boehner	14	2.64	0.84	Clinton	30	2.70	0.7
	Rubio	13	2.23	0.83	Trump	31	2.32	0.9
		90				**170**		
Same-sex marriage	DeGeneres	14	4.14	0.77	DeGeneres	31	4.45	0.7
	Gaga	11	3.36	0.92	John	27	3.85	0.8
	John	9	3.33	1.12	Obama	30	3.80	0.8
	Clinton	15	3.07	0.96	Clinton	33	3.27	0.8
	Obama	20	3.05	1.32	Gaga	28	3.21	0.9
	Boehner	14	2.21	1.05	Rubio	23	2.96	0.6
	Tebow	14	2.21	0.98	Tebow	23	2.65	0.8
	Rubio	12	1.833	0.83	Trump	33	2.00	0.9
		109				**228**		
Genetic testing	Jolie	15	3.47	1.13	Jolie	22	3.36	0.6
	Clinton	14	3.14	0.77	Obama	29	3.24	0.7
	Obama	16	2.69	1.25	Clinton	30	3.00	0.7
	Boehner	14	2.64	0.63	Rubio	23	2.87	0.5
	Rubio	12	2.08	0.90	Trump	30	2.27	0.8
		71				**134**		
Marijuana legalization	Nelson	15	3.80	1.01	Nelson	20	4.15	0.9
	Clinton	15	3.13	0.74	Obama	30	3.40	0.8
	Boehner	14	2.57	0.76	Clinton	32	2.94	0.9
	Obama	18	2.50	1.25	Rubio	23	2.91	0.6
	Rubio	12	1.83	0.83	Trump	32	2.59	0.9
		74				**137**		

Note: Numbers in bold represent totals.

Table 4.5 Democratic Perceptions of Credibility: Politician Primacy Cases

	2013				2016			
Issue	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD
Income inequality	Obama	14	4.50	0.65	Obama	19	4.05	1.0
	Clinton	13	3.39	0.87	Clinton	23	3.48	1.1
	Springsteen	13	2.69	0.85	Springsteen	12	3.17	0.5
	Rubio	13	2.23	1.17	Rubio	21	2.76	0.9
	Boehner	15	2.20	0.77	Trump	23	1.74	1.0
		68				**98**		
Gun control	Obama	18	3.89	1.13	Obama	19	3.89	1.2
	Clinton	13	3.31	1.03	Clinton	23	3.52	1.1
	Springsteen	19	2.53	0.84	Springsteen	12	3.17	0.7
	Boehner	15	2.27	0.96	Eastwood	20	3.10	0.9
	Eastwood	12	1.83	0.72	Rubio	21	2.90	1.1
	Rubio	15	1.73	0.88	Trump	23	2.35	0.9
		92				**118**		
Genocide in Darfur	Clinton	13	3.85	0.69	Obama	19	4.00	0.9
	Obama	15	3.53	0.74	Clinton	23	3.48	0.9
	Clooney	17	2.88	0.70	Clooney	17	3.06	0.5
	Boehner	15	2.40	0.74	Rubio	21	2.71	0.9
	Rubio	14	2.07	0.92	Trump	23	2.13	0.9
		74				**103**		
Environmental protection	Clinton	13	3.77	0.83	Obama	19	4.26	0.6
	Obama	14	3.36	1.01	Clinton	41	3.32	0.9
	Redford	12	3.17	0.94	Redford	10	2.80	0.6
	Boehner	15	2.53	0.99	Rubio	20	2.75	0.9
	Rubio	13	1.92	0.86	Trump	21	1.90	1.1
		67				**111**		

Note: Numbers in bold represent totals.

For example, Obama is significantly the most credible political actor on the question of income inequality. In 2016, only Clinton had a comparable level of credibility. Springsteen's credibility in 2013 was equivalent to all of the figures except Obama, and in 2016 his credibility was significantly higher than Trump's.[23] On gun control, Democrats significantly favored Obama and Clinton in the 2013 sample. In the 2016 sample, both were significantly more credible than Trump, but Eastwood and Springsteen were still comparably credible to all public figures on that list.[24] The same general pattern is true for the genocide issue, where Obama and Clinton are in the top positions and significantly higher in credibility than the Republicans. In 2013, Clooney was less credible than Clinton but not Obama. In 2016, he was less credible than Obama and significantly more credible than Trump.[25] Likewise, environmental protection places Obama and Clinton on top, the Republicans on bottom, and Redford in the middle. In 2013, Redford was more credible than Rubio. In 2016, he was only significantly less credible than Obama. Otherwise, his credibility is comparable to the rest of the politicians.[26]

In table 4.6 the pattern of relegating Republicans to the bottom of the credibility list continues across issues. However, in some cases, celebrities reach the upper echelon of being comparably credible to the established Democratic politicians. This is true in the AIDS case, where John and DeGeneres were significantly more credible than the Republicans were, and their credibility was largely indistinguishable from Clinton's and Obama's.[27] On the 2013 same-sex marriage sample, DeGeneres was significantly more credible than all of the other figures except John, Obama, and Clinton, and in 2016, Lady Gaga. John was more credible than Tebow and the Republicans in the 2013 and 2016 samples. In 2016, Gaga was more credible than Trump.[28]

On the genetic testing issue, Jolie was significantly more credible than Rubio in 2013 and Trump in 2016, but comparably credible to Clinton and Obama.[29] Nelson was not as credible as Obama in either sample on marijuana legalization, although he was significantly more credible than Rubio and Trump in the 2016 sample.[30] On the question of the Syrian conflict, Clooney was significantly less credible than Obama and Clinton in 2013, but only less than Obama in 2016. Jolie was also less credible than Obama and Clinton in the 2013 sample, but in the 2016 sample she was

significantly more credible than the Republicans and indistinguishable from Clinton, Obama, or Clooney.[31]

Table 4.6 Democratic Perceptions of Credibility: Celebrity Primacy Cases

	2013				2016			
Issue	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD
AIDS	John	12	3.83	1.03	Obama	19	4.00	0.8
	Obama	17	3.59	0.80	John	26	3.96	0.9
	DeGeneres	13	3.54	0.78	Clinton	26	3.62	0.7
	Clinton	13	3.39	0.87	DeGeneres	19	3.05	0.9
	Boehner	15	2.60	0.74	Rubio	21	2.90	0.8
	Rubio	14	2.21	0.89	Trump	27	2.15	1.1
		84				**138**		
Same-sex marriage	DeGeneres	14	4.29	0.73	DeGeneres	19	4.21	0.9
	John	17	3.82	0.81	John	26	4.19	0.9
	Obama	18	3.72	1.07	Obama	19	4.05	1.0
	Clinton	13	3.31	1.18	Gaga	13	3.77	0.7
	Gaga	16	2.75	1.24	Clinton	28	3.43	1.0
	Tebow	12	2.25	0.97	Rubio	21	2.57	1.0
	Boehner	16	1.94	0.85	Tebow	8	2.50	0.9
	Rubio	14	1.929	0.92	Trump	28	1.82	0.9
		120				**162**		
Genetic testing	Jolie	12	3.50	1.24	Jolie	22	3.86	1.0
	Clinton	13	3.31	0.85	Obama	19	3.84	0.9
	Obama	14	2.86	0.95	Clinton	22	3.41	0.9
	Boehner	15	2.40	0.74	Rubio	21	3.00	0.9
	Rubio	13	2.00	0.91	Trump	22	2.41	1.0
		67				**106**		

Marijuana legalization	Obama	18	3.44	0.92	Obama	19	3.79	0.9
	Clinton	13	3.23	0.83	Nelson	26	3.62	1.1
	Boehner	15	2.40	0.83	Clinton	28	3.32	0.6
	Nelson	12	2.25	0.97	Rubio	21	2.52	0.8
	Rubio	13	2.00	0.91	Trump	28	2.07	1.0
		71				**122**		
Syrian conflict	Obama	18	3.89	0.96	Obama	18	4.11	0.9
	Clinton	13	3.69	0.63	Jolie	22	3.68	0.8
	Clooney	17	2.77	0.75	Clinton	24	3.42	1.0
	Jolie	12	2.58	0.90	Clooney	17	3.06	0.8
	Boehner	16	2.56	0.81	Rubio	21	2.71	1.0
	Rubio	14	1.93	0.92	Trump	24	2.17	1.3
		90				**126**		

Note: Numbers in bold represent totals.

Republicans

For the most part, the results in table 4.7 mirror the conclusions from the analysis of Democrats' perceptions. Like Democrats, Republicans put their own first. With the exception of Eastwood on gun control, Republican politicians hold the top two positions in each category. There is also some evidence for the notion that they rank celebrities higher than members of the opposition party, at least in some cases. Springsteen is generally rejected in all samples, but Eastwood appears to have credibility that equals or exceeds that of Democrats.

For Republicans considering the issue of income inequality, the 2013 list places Boehner and Rubio at the top of the list, and the 2016 list places Trump and Rubio at the top. Boehner was only significantly more credible than Springsteen, although Rubio was not. In 2016, Trump was only significantly more credible than Clinton. Springsteen was no longer at the bottom, and his credibility was comparable to all other figures on the list.[32]

On gun control, Boehner was significantly more credible than Clinton or Springsteen, and Rubio was more credible than Springsteen in the 2013 sample. In the 2016 sample, Trump was significantly more credible than Springsteen and Clinton. Although Eastwood was not significantly different from Trump in perceived credibility, he does top the list and is also significantly more credible than Springsteen and Clinton.[33]

The results on the genocide issue did not produce significant differences between the public figures' credibility on the 2013 sample, so these results were not included in table 4.7. There was only one significant result in 2016—that Obama was more credible than Clinton. Clooney's credibility was comparable to that of all the other public figures in both samples.[34] Likewise, neither the 2013 or 2016 environmental protection issue produced any significant results, implying that Redford was no more or less credible than any other public figure on the list.

The AIDS case produced a strikingly different result. John and DeGeneres top the credibility list for Republicans on this issue. In 2013, John was significantly more credible than Boehner and Obama. In 2016, he was significantly more credible than Clinton, Rubio, and Trump. Even DeGeneres was more credible than Trump.[35] The same pattern holds for the same-sex marriage question. The 2013 results produced only one significant finding: that John was more credible than Lady Gaga. The rest were comparably credible, suggesting that no politician was necessarily more or less credible than any celebrity. However, the 2016 sample concludes that DeGeneres was more credible than all of the politicians and only comparably credible to John and Tebow. John was more credible than all politicians except Obama.[36] Indeed, in the 2016 samples on both issues, John and DeGeneres were comparably credible at a higher level, and the remaining four politicians were comparably credible at a lower level. For Republicans on these issues, celebrities were more credible than politicians.

Table 4.7 Republican Perceptions of Credibility: Politician Primacy Cases.

	2013				2016			
Issue	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD
Income inequality	Boehner	13	3.46	0.97	Trump	30	3.30	1.2
	Rubio	15	3.40	1.18	Rubio	28	3.14	0.5
	Clinton	14	3.07	1.27	Obama	20	3.05	1.1
	Obama	17	2.53	1.62	Springsteen	18	2.67	0.9
	Springsteen	13	1.92	0.95	Clinton	30	2.37	1.0
		72				**126**		
Gun control	Boehner	13	3.85	0.90	Eastwood	28	3.54	0.9
	Rubio	15	3.73	0.96	Trump	30	3.40	0.9
	Obama	18	2.78	1.66	Rubio	28	3.07	0.6
	Eastwood	19	2.74	1.28	Obama	20	2.75	1.1
	Clinton	14	2.29	1.38	Springsteen	18	2.56	0.8
	Springsteen	14	2.07	0.92	Clinton	30	2.50	1.1
		93				**154**		

Note: Numbers in bold represent totals.

Table 4.8 Republican Perceptions of Credibility: Celebrity Primacy Cases

	2013				2016			
Issue	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD	Public figure	*N*	Mean	SD
AIDS	John	17	3.77	1.30	John	28	3.89	0.8
	DeGeneres	13	3.46	1.27	DeGeneres	19	3.42	0.6
	Rubio	16	3.19	0.83	Rubio	27	3.15	0.6
	Clinton	14	3.07	1.21	Obama	19	3.11	1.2
	Boehner	13	2.54	0.66	Clinton	28	2.89	0.8
	Obama	21	2.38	1.07	Trump	28	2.86	0.6
		94				**149**		
Same-sex marriage	John	15	3.87	0.92	DeGeneres	20	4.30	0.8
	DeGeneres	13	3.46	1.45	John	28	3.93	0.8
	Rubio	15	3.20	1.15	Tebow	22	3.36	1.1
	Boehner	13	2.92	1.26	Obama	19	3.16	1.0
	Clinton	14	2.86	1.35	Gaga	29	3.10	0.9
	Obama	19	2.84	1.30	Rubio	28	3.07	0.6
	Tebow	15	2.60	1.40	Clinton	31	2.71	1.1
	Gaga	14	2.00	1.24	Trump	31	2.68	1.2
		118				**208**		
Genetic testing	Jolie	17	3.65	1.11	Jolie	17	3.59	0.8
	Rubio	15	3.00	0.76	Obama	18	3.11	0.9
	Boehner	13	2.85	1.14	Rubio	27	3.00	0.4
	Clinton	14	2.79	1.19	Trump	28	3.00	0.7
	Obama	17	2.35	1.06	Clinton	29	2.76	0.8
		76				**119**		

Marijuana legalization	Nelson	15	3.53	1.41	Nelson	27	4.04	0.9
	Rubio	15	3.20	0.56	Obama	21	3.29	1.0
	Obama	18	2.89	1.02	Rubio	27	3.04	0.5
	Clinton	14	2.79	1.53	Trump	29	2.72	0.8
	Boehner	13	2.77	1.09	Clinton	29	2.45	0.9
		75				**133**		
Syrian conflict	Rubio	15	3.40	0.99	Jolie	17	3.59	0.8
	Boehner	13	3.39	1.04	Trump	30	3.23	1.0
	Clinton	14	3.29	1.27	Rubio	27	3.15	0.5
	Obama	18	2.83	1.38	Obama	20	3.00	1.2
	Jolie	17	2.29	1.16	Clooney	19	2.68	1.0
	Clooney	16	2.06	0.85	Clinton	30	2.40	1.1
		78				**126**		

Note: Numbers in bold represent totals.

When considering genetic testing, Republican respondents found Jolie more credible than Obama in 2013 and Clinton in 2016, but not necessarily more credible than Republican politicians, reinforcing the tendency for partisans to place their own politicians and celebrities above opposition politicians.[37] Republicans rated Nelson as most credible on both lists, although the 2013 sample did not produce significant results. However, the 2016 results concluded that Nelson was significantly more credible than any of the other public figures except Obama.[38] The Syrian case offered mixed results. In the 2013 sample, Republicans ranked the public figures with politicians first and celebrities last. It is one of the few cases and samples where everything lines up the way that the politician primacy hypothesis would predict. Both Rubio and Boehner are significantly more credible than Clooney. However, the 2016 sample paints a different picture. In this case Jolie, Trump, and Rubio are significantly more credible than Clinton. Clooney is no more or less credible than any of the other public figures in this sample.[39]

INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

Thus far, we can draw a few basic conclusions. First, evidence from this analysis suggests that the politician primacy hypothesis can be rejected. Granted, some cases support it. However, in most cases, celebrities and politicians are comparably credible, and in many of them celebrities are ranked as more credible than politicians. Celebrities are even more credible on some issues than one past and one current president of the United States.

Second, credibility is fluid over time. There was a time in 2013 when Clinton was more popular than Obama, when Rubio was notorious for that nervous sip of water, and when Eastwood was re-creating the lyrics to a Neil Diamond song on the RNC stage: “No one heard at all, not even the chair” (Andrews 2016). Changes in time and circumstances affect people’s perceptions of individuals and issues. Indeed, one curious finding is that Republicans considered two gay celebrity activists—Elton John and Ellen DeGeneres—to be more credible on same-sex marriage and fighting AIDS than Republican politicians. That may be reflective of many Republicans’ changing attitudes toward gay rights. Some Republican politicians may be out of touch with their affiliates on this issue. Promoting anti-gay sentiments and policies may play well with their right-wing or conservative Christian base but may not appeal to more moderate Republican voters or to the more libertarian wing of the party. Second, the 2016 sample is, on average, much younger than the 2013 sample. Younger people in general tend to be more sensitive to gay rights issues, irrespective of party identification. Time and circumstance seem to have altered the way many Republicans perceive this issue and thus perhaps the way that they evaluate the credibility of politicians and celebrities.

Third, partisans generally favor their own politicians and reject politicians from the opposing parties. They are willing to rate a celebrity as more credible than someone from the opposing party. So there is some support for the idea that some celebrities transcend party affiliation and are able to influence people across the political spectrum.

Two major questions remain. First, are there partisan biases or demographic characteristics that influence people’s credibility rankings? For example, is Clint Eastwood more credible among Republican men? Is George Clooney more credible among Democratic women? Second, are

there particular characteristics of celebrities that make them more likely to be credible? The following two sections will address these questions.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND CREDIBILITY

Do the characteristics of respondents make them more likely to favor a particular celebrity or politician? A deeper analysis of the data reveals some significant relationships between gender, age, education, and party affiliation.

Does gender affect credibility ratings? One might expect women to identify with women or men with men. Women might be more likely to believe that Clinton or Jolie is credible, for example. However, there was very little gender bias directed toward any public figures with only one exception: men are more likely to find Clooney credible.[40]

Age appears to be a factor affecting people's attitudes toward some of the public figures. Those who find Rubio, Eastwood, and Tebow credible tend to skew slightly younger. Those who think Clinton is credible tend to be slightly older.[41]

Education also was a significant determinant of credibility ratings. Those with relatively less education tend to find Eastwood and Nelson credible.[42] Education is relative, however, considering that practically all respondents had at least some undergraduate education, and many had graduate degrees. So those less educated in this case tended to be traditional college students as opposed to people seeking or having completed a graduate degree, or people with a high school education or less.

Party affiliation also produced some significant results. Independents tend to view Clinton, Springsteen, and Clooney as credible spokespeople, but not Trump.[43] Democrats are more likely to find Obama, Clinton, and Springsteen credible and less likely to find Nelson, Eastwood, and Trump credible.[44] Republicans find Trump, Rubio, Boehner, and Tebow credible, but not Clinton, Springsteen, or Clooney.[45]

Some of these results are not particularly surprising. The notion that younger people might favor Rubio or that older people favor Clinton is consistent with polling data from 2016. Indeed, one of the challenges of the Clinton campaign was to convert younger supporters of Sanders into votes for Clinton, a factor that may have played into her electoral defeat. The

sample seems to reinforce this challenge. On the 2016 survey, respondents were asked for whom they intended to vote in the election. Many young Democrats wrote on the paper survey that they intended to write in Bernie Sanders.

Republicans and Democrats are more likely to think their own politicians are credible. What is surprising, however, is that some figures are not universally disdained by the opposite side. Republicans showed no significant rejection of Obama's credibility. Democrats did not reject Rubio or Boehner's credibility. This again maybe a sign that typical Republican and Democratic voters are more moderate than national party politicians and commentators believe.

Partisans believe that some celebrities are more credible than others. Springsteen is favored by independents and Democrats. Clooney only has strong support from independents. Tim Tebow only attracts strong Republican support. Independents do not reject any celebrities or politicians other than Trump. Democrats only reject Nelson, Eastwood, and Trump. Republicans only reject Clinton, Springsteen, and Clooney.

While not all of these results can be easily explained, most of these findings are consistent with anecdotal evidence of these celebrities' political activities. Bruce Springsteen has campaigned for John Kerry and Hillary Clinton, which would make him find favor with those who support Democrats, but not with Republicans. Clooney hosted fund-raisers for Obama. Tebow is a Christian who is not overtly political but has become a hero of the right for public professions of faith and speeches at Christian universities that publicly endorse Republican candidates. Clint Eastwood is a Republican and endorsed Mitt Romney at the Republican National Convention in 2012. It is possible that the strong partisan inclinations of these celebrities correlate positively to perceived credibility from partisan respondents.

While demographics and particularly party ID may justify high or low credibility scores for many celebrities, it does not tell the whole story. First, Willie Nelson was less likely to be considered credible by Democrats, even though he endorsed Bernie Sanders and later Hillary Clinton (Leahey 2016). Second, most of the celebrities in this study have made candidate endorsements and expressed partisan biases. Lady Gaga and Ellen DeGeneres endorsed Hillary Clinton for president. Elton John is not an American citizen, but he performed at a fund raiser for Clinton. While Redford did not make a public endorsement, he made it clear that he was not

supporting Trump. Only Jolie has been less forthcoming about her politics. So it is not clear that a celebrity's party affiliation aligning with respondents' party affiliation results in a higher credibility score in all cases. Of course, it is possible that some endorsements are more public than others and that respondents are not aware of some of the political inclinations of these celebrities. Eastwood speaking at the Republican National Convention is a higher profile event than Nelson telling a reporter that he likes Bernie Sanders.

In addition, it does not appear that Democrats are any more likely than Republicans to think that celebrities are credible. Republicans and Democrats have favorite celebrities to hate and in this study only one each that they thought was truly credible. The bias against Hollywood values is true among Republicans for some celebrities, but the attitude also carries over to Democrats, only for different celebrities.

Finally, a striking result is how many celebrities are perceived as highly credible without reference to demographics or party identification at all. Elton John, Ellen DeGeneres, and Angelina Jolie were considered highly credible in their issue areas and seem to be universally acceptable across groups. In this way, celebrities can be seen as possible bridges between partisans. People may not think that politicians from the other party are credible, but they may believe that celebrities are more credible and may be more likely to listen to them. Thus credibility may not only be a function of the characteristics of the respondent but also the characteristics of the celebrity, which will be discussed in the next section.

ARE PEOPLE REALLY "BLITHERING IDIOTS"? CREDIBILITY AND EXPERT POWER

Are respondents in the survey idiots for believing that a celebrity is as credible as a politician? Beyond personal biases, respondents may have legitimate reasons for believing so. Chapter 2 hypothesizes that expert power may be a factor. That is, celebrities attempt to incorporate themselves in advocacy networks and institutions and to leverage their personal experiences and specialized knowledge in order to establish credibility.

Further statistical analyses were employed to determine whether expert power plays a role in the way that people perceive the credibility of

celebrities, particularly celebrities' association with political institutions and their personal expertise. Personal experience and expertise scores were assigned based on whether the celebrity possessed specific area experience knowledge on the issue. For example, Clooney's experience visiting refugees in Darfur as the foundation for congressio nal hearings qualifies as specialized knowledge. DeGeneres's identity places her close to the same-sex marriage issue and qualifies as a strong personal experience.

In addition, celebrities were scored according to their level of institutionalization. Institutionalization is a measure of the depth of connection that celebrities have with formal organizations that mobilize behind an issue. Scores are based on the number of affiliations a celebrity has, the number of organizations founded by the celebrity, and affiliation with the United Nations. The more affiliations, the higher the score. For example, Clooney cofounded Not on Our Watch, an international relief and humanitarian aid organization designed to bring attention to human rights violations and to end atrocities such as genocide. He is also associated with the ONE campaign, Make Poverty History, American Foundation for AIDS Research, Enough Project, and the UN World Food Programme. One would expect that his expertise in these issues would be at least subliminally communicated through the media or would provide enough information to give him a level of knowledge when advocating for a cause.[46]

Results of this analysis conclude that institutionalization and personal experience/expertise are positively correlated with a celebrity's credibility. The effect is relatively small but significant.[47] In short, celebrities' efforts to differentiate themselves as experts, or their personal connections to these issues, make respondents more likely to give high credibility scores than those who have little expertise or connection to the issues. For example, Elton John, a gay musician, started the Elton John AIDS Foundation in 1992 and has lobbied Congress to increase funding for AIDS treatment internationally. Indeed, the pro-federal funding frame for the AIDS issue employed in chapter 5 was paraphrased from quotes by Elton John. Angelina Jolie is a UN ambassador who regularly visits refugee camps. Willie Nelson has founded institutions, cooperated with and led existing pressure groups, and actively organized on behalf of marijuana legalization. Celebrities who have no known connection to real advocacy on an issue are ranked poorly on those issues. Thus, respondents do not rank just any celebrity as credible.

There seems to be a connection between the celebrity's experience and expertise as an advocate and people's belief in their credibility.

THE TRUMP PROBLEM: WHAT'S WRONG WITH REPUBLICAN POLITICIANS?

The demographic analysis revealed that Republicans, like Democrats, are more likely to give high credibility scores to their own politicians than to any other politician or celebrity. Among celebrities, only Tim Tebow is likely to benefit from a pro-Republican bias. Democrats favored Bruce Springsteen. In the same-sex marriage case, Elton John and Angelina Jolie were ranked most credible for both Republicans and Democrats. This analysis suggests that Republicans and Democrats view politicians and celebrities in a similar way.

Despite this similarity, the pattern of their rankings was quite different. In the analysis of Democrats, either Obama or Clinton occupies one or both of the top two places in sixteen out of the eighteen cases that were statistically significant (89 percent). However, Republicans placed Trump, Rubio, or Boehner in one or both of the top two positions in only eight of fourteen cases (57 percent).

Moreover, Trump's credibility was markedly low across issues. He was at or near the bottom of every list in the general analysis, and for Democrats and independents, his low credibility was always statistically significant. Even Republicans did not count him as highly credible across all issues. Among those cases that produced statistically significant results, Republicans only ranked him in the top two positions two out of seven times.

Even though Republicans and Democrats generally have similar biases, Republican politicians seem to be less popular among Republicans than Democratic politicians are among Democrats. In every single category and case, Republicans rank their politicians lower than Democrats rank theirs. This likely explains why Republicans were at the bottom of the credibility lists in the general analysis. It also may explain why a few of the Republican cases produced no significant results—that is, in some of the cases, we could not discern differences between any of the figures on the list. Republicans seem to look more cynically upon their own politicians, which makes

celebrities appear comparably credible. In short, Republicans may not love celebrities, but they certainly reject Democrats and express antipathy toward many Republican politicians.

Much was made of an "enthusiasm gap" in the 2016 election, the notion that Trump benefited from a high level of enthusiasm from his followers while Clinton did not. Trump drove record turnout in the primary, while his seventeen Republican rivals, most of them experienced and of the establishment, could not generate the same excitement. Perhaps Trump's celebrity status allowed him to stand out or his skills as a performer generated this enthusiasm. Likewise, Clinton could never quite draw the same enthusiasm that Democrats had for Obama or Sanders to her own campaign (D. Smith 2016). One could argue that Republicans simply have little enthusiasm for their establishment leaders, which is reflected in this survey. Indeed, it would explain not only a relatively weak showing for Republican politicians but also a weaker showing for Clinton in 2016 compared with the 2013 sample. Of course, a redesign of the survey including any of these candidates or Paul Ryan or Mitch McConnell might have led to a different result. However, Trump won the nomination and the presidency, and his credibility numbers are low too. If the enthusiasm gap explains weak credibility for some politicians, it does not explain why Trump fares worse than most in the 2016 sample. Indeed, the only category where he is ranked as most credible among Republicans is income inequality. In short, why didn't Trump score higher among Republicans?

One possible answer is that the survey asked the wrong questions. Issues that were salient in 2013 were not as salient in 2016. I made no effort to add new issues when I redeployed the survey in 2016, because my goal was to compare results across the same issues over time to see if we would see similar results. So while it may be reasonable to conclude that Republicans lack enthusiasm for their politicians, it is also fair to say that they may not have had much enthusiasm for many of the issues in the survey.

Moreover, the one issue where Trump topped the list for Republicans—income inequality—is odd. It is odd in part because Republicans traditionally have denied that income inequality is a problem, and therefore do not advance specific plans to address it, other than arguing that revising the tax code or cutting regulations would hypothetically increase growth and prosperity for all. Typically, it would be hard to attribute credibility to a Republican on this issue, because most Republicans do not talk much about it. Trump was different. In a sense, income inequality was a centerpiece of

his campaign. He argued that the system was fixed, that free trade and globalization caused the working class to suffer, that Wall Street was seeing more of the benefits while regular people suffered, and that he ambiguously promised to fix the system for them. Thus, it is not surprising that Trump was seen as more credible on this issue. It was likely the issue that made the difference in his successful campaign in states like Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Would Republicans rank Trump higher on this survey if they were asked about Trump's credibility on immigration, trade, and deregulation? Possibly. These issues were highly salient in the 2016 election and play well to Trump's potential credibility as an experienced businessman.

Perhaps part of Trump's credibility problem is that he alienated many of the respondents taking the survey. Despite Trump's performance skills and long-term celebrity status—and his successful election to the presidency—he lacks many of the qualities that connect celebrities to citizens. He lacks an ability to universally appeal to the citizenry, and his hyperpartisan rhetoric sometimes alienates people in his own party. Indeed, it is possible that Trump's success is altogether divorced from the concept of credibility. After all, it has been well documented that Trump fabricates facts, exaggerates statistics and stories, or at least just gets his facts wrong. None of this makes a persuasive case for credibility. Perhaps credibility simply does not matter with some people. Discovering this mystery factor will doubtless be the subject of many books to come.

On the other hand, maybe Trump does not need the celebrity qualities that seem to have brought credibility to others in this study. Indeed, he may be more successful as a divider than as a uniter. His rhetoric and skills may be effective enough to give him an extremely narrow but motivated base. In the charged political environment of 2017, Trump does not need to please everyone. He just needs enough enthusiasm to maintain power and momentum. Perhaps his credibility scores in this survey are, likewise, just good enough, particularly with Republican respondents.

However, comparable enthusiasm for celebrities and politicians may be a symptom of larger emerging social problems. Indeed, perhaps Sabato would not be wrong about the credibility of celebrities if this study were conducted at another time in another generation. As chapter 2 indicated, celebrity culture has been a rising phenomenon, connected to the growth of media organizations and delivery platforms. However, it also may be linked to a declining faith and participation in civil society (Putnam 2001). In a hacked

email leaked to the press, former secretary of state Colin Powell articulated this concern: “Culture is going and with it the ties that bind. An increasing theme in my speeches—celebrification of our society. . . . It is time to start ignoring him [Trump]. You guys [the media] are playing his game, you are his oxygen” (C. Powell 2016).

For various reasons—the hollowing of the middle class and associated demands of more work for less pay, the growing cynicism about politics from Vietnam and Watergate onward, the collective sense of futility felt by many Americans as politicians seem to ignore their needs while interest groups and corporations flood the system with influence money—citizens have been dropping out of active civic involvement. In an atmosphere where citizens are so soured on politics and profoundly distrust politicians, it makes sense that citizens may gravitate toward heroes from outside the system—such as celebrities—who have little to profit from political activism and appear to be speaking on principle.

In follow-up interviews with respondents after the 2016 sample, people expressed these same sentiments. Consider these statements:

> “Celebrities aren’t typically paid for their view nor are they standing to financially gain.”
>
> “When Sting speaks about political issues, I tend to listen to what he has to say but do not necessarily weigh it any differently than a politician on the same topic. Politicians with very little credibility in their job would have very little credibility with me on political issues as well.”
>
> “Elton John gives millions of dollars to AIDS and other causes. If it weren’t for people like him, millions of people might be dead.”
>
> “Politicians have ties to lobbyists and parties that may sway their decisions. Playing these politics is what makes them less credible.”
>
> “Celebrities seem more trustworthy than a politician. Sometimes politicians can have a negative look or reputation.”
>
> When a respondent was asked about how he feels about having a celebrity as a president, he responded, “I’m fine. I think we needed someone other than a politician.”

Indeed, some have argued that the rise of Trump is the ultimate manifestation of public cynicism and fatalism. In the words of one respondent, “I think that some politicians are not qualified and are idiots, to be honest. I also think that politicians lie a lot to get the vote. Celebrities

focus on one thing that they are interested in. They aren't trying to get a vote. They are trying to fix a problem." Trump represents everything that this respondent believes is desirable about a celebrity. He represents a rejection of the status quo and conventional politicians: the ultimate celebrity outsider, the man with enough money not to be bought, a businessman who understands results and is willing to "cut red tape" and "drain the swamp" to get the job done. As a result, Trump may also represent the ultimate loss of faith in democratic institutions. His supporters seem to want a strongman and share his distrust of basic tenets of republican democracy such as a free press and an independent judiciary.

While these broader trends in civil society may be playing a role in the increasing credibility of celebrities, a lack of faith in government and politicians is particularly pronounced in conservative and Republican circles. As Ronald Reagan said in his farewell address in 1988, "Man is not free unless government is limited. There's a clear cause and effect here that is as neat and predictable as a law of physics: As government expands, liberty contracts." This same caution about the role of government was carried forward by the Bush administration and the Tea Party, which rose in opposition to President Obama's public agenda in 2009. The problem is that Republicans elected representatives to stop government from expanding, and these representatives were essentially hostile to the idea of functional government. John Boehner had a difficult time working with President Obama or achieving a Republican agenda because many in this Freedom Caucus would rather have no policies passed than to accept compromises, even within their own party (Meltzer 2015). Legislative gridlock led to record low congressional approval ratings. So it may be understandable why Republicans care less for their politicians and politicians in general. They do not trust government. They elect people who do not trust government, and then they are, not surprisingly, cynical about the ineffectiveness of government operated by those who would rather shut it down than trust it.

IS SECOND PLACE FOR LOSERS?

In a 2013 tweet, Trump famously quoted professional golfer Walter Hagen as saying, "No one remembers who came in second." As some commentators ironically quipped after Trump's second-place finish in the

Iowa caucus, “Second place is for losers” (Wing 2016). To some extent, this chapter is about public figures who come in second. Not all politicians will be counted as most credible across every issue, and not all celebrities languish for lack of credibility. The purpose of this chapter is not to demonstrate that celebrities are unequivocally more credible than politicians are. Indeed, as chapter 2 indicates, scholars would fully expect public officials to have a near monopoly—or at least a clear advantage—when it comes to credibility on nearly any political issue. So it is not surprising that politicians are perceived as most credible across many issues and that celebrities rank second or lower in some of the rankings. However, the story here is not that celebrities don’t “win” this credibility contest. The amazing finding is that politicians, with some exceptions, don’t win, either. Celebrities top several of the credibility lists, and they rank higher than some politicians on most of them or are comparably credible. This chapter finds little support for the politician primacy hypothesis. Politicians are credible on some issues some of the time. As in the case of Bob Marley, in some circumstances, celebrities may be able to command a degree of credibility that politicians cannot achieve.

Moreover, respondents from all political parties rank celebrities highly. Democrats think Bruce Springsteen is credible on income inequality or gun control, and Republicans think Tim Tebow is credible on same-sex marriage. Respondents from both major parties think that Angelina Jolie and Elton John are credible. The more intriguing question is not simply whether celebrities are more credible than politicians but how they compare with politicians’ credibility and why?

In some cases, the mean credibility differences between celebrities and politicians were significant. On the AIDS issue, Elton John was overall more credible than President Obama. On genetic testing, Angelina Jolie was more credible than all of the politicians in the survey except for Hillary Clinton. On marijuana legalization, Willie Nelson was more credible than both Republican politicians. On same-sex marriage, Ellen DeGeneres was more credible than every celebrity and politician in the survey except for Elton John. When each issue is broken down by party affiliation, many of these findings are reinforced. Republicans rank Jolie higher than Obama on genetic testing. Democrats rank Redford higher than Rubio on the environment. In some cases, celebrities perform better than politicians across issues. In many cases, partisans favor celebrities over politicians from the opposing party. There was not a single case in which a celebrity was ranked

lower than all of the politicians at a statistically significant level. What may be most striking and surprising about these findings is how politicians' and celebrities' credibility is so comparable and possibly interchangeable.

Not just any celebrity can effectively advocate on any issue, a finding consistent with the broader literature on product endorsement (Tuttle 2012). This study is different, in that it looks at celebrity credibility across political issues. One might expect celebrities to be credible depending on whether they can sell pocketknives or perfume, but one would not automatically assume that they would be credible spokespeople on political issues. So it is surprising that celebrities are credible and that credibility is related to their experience and area expertise.

This is an important finding not only because of what it tells us about celebrities and politics but also because it undermines our assumptions about how politics works in the status quo. Many of us expected that the more experienced candidate, Hillary Clinton, would easily defeat the inexperienced Donald Trump. She should have more credibility given her long, successful record. However, economic and political factors have changed the way people perceive the political world and, with it, politicians. As we lose faith in politicians and the political system, celebrities and outsiders—such as Trump—appear more and more credible.

While these variables offer insight on the factors that lead a celebrity to be more or less credible, these data do not definitively conclude that experience and expertise make certain celebrities more credible than politicians on any given issue. On the contrary, as revealed in the case of genocide in Darfur, Clooney is not top ranked among political actors despite his expertise and experience on the issue. The important conclusion, as posited in chapter 2, is that celebrities may gain credibility through expert power—that becoming expert or emphasizing their connections to the issue may make them influential in the public sphere. Indeed, when coupled with the conclusions of chapter 3, a portrait of the influential celebrity becomes clearer. Some celebrities are capable of drawing attention to political issues in the media. However, to return to the example of Dennis Rodman, attention does not equate to credibility. A celebrity who is both capable of commanding attention and is perceived as credible on an issue, likely through expertise and experience, maybe considerably influential.

Chapters 3 and 4 have established that celebrities are capable of capturing attention when advocating on political issues and are perceived as credible when engaging in public advocacy. Even if celebrities possess these skills,

are they persuasive when advocating for political issues? One might expect a positive answer under some circumstances, given the conclusion that they can be credible. In addition, if those who declare a clear party affiliation rank a celebrity as more credible than people of the opposing political party, perhaps celebrities may act as a bridge, making dissonant messages more palatable. In a political system where a single politician is rarely ranked first in terms of credibility across all issues and by members of all political parties, these celebrities who rank second best in the eyes of partisans may play a very important role.

An ability to persuade could translate to successful agenda setting in the media, but also in personal lobbying efforts, which have important implications for insider strategies. The next chapter will attempt to answer this question: can a celebrity frame issues and prime audiences? Demonstrating that celebrities are also capable of persuasion, they would highlight an additional dimension of influence.

5. The Power of Persuasion: Celebrities Frame Political Issues

Just as Martin Luther King Jr. called upon Harry Belafonte to draw attention to civil rights in the 1960s, as Paul Watson called upon Bo Derek to raise awareness about environmental causes in the 1980s, as Jamie Drummond called upon Bono to increase the profile of the problem of debt in the developing world in the 1990s, and as John Prendergast called upon Angelina Jolie to witness the plight of a Congolese refugee camp in the 2000s, Father Bill Ayers was shopping for a celebrity to expose Americans to the effects of a severe drought and famine in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1970s. Ayers became a Catholic priest in a New York archdiocese in 1966, and eventually began hosting a radio show where he interviewed rock musicians about the spiritual meaning behind their music. Ayers was inspired by George Harrison's 1971 Concert for Bangladesh at Madison Square Garden—the first major benefit concert of its kind. Harrison intended to achieve two purposes with the concert: to publicize the crisis in Bangladesh and to raise money for UNICEF to aid the refugees. Ayers thought that if he could get a rock musician to organize a similar event, he could raise money to assist the famine stricken in Africa (Konig 1998). In 1974, Ayers befriended singer Harry Chapin, famous for his song "Cat's in the Cradle," after interviewing him on his show, and thought Chapin had the potential to lead the effort.

When asked, Chapin was moved but skeptical. "I'm not George Harrison," Chapin soberly responded, realistically reasoning that his fame for a single hit was paltry compared with a former Beatle with a musical career that had already spanned more than a decade, and who was flanked by Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, and others at the Concert for Bangladesh. It would take him fifty concerts to make as much as Harrison and his friends could make in one night, Chapin said. Nonetheless, Ayers and Chapin connected with the United Nations and eventually started an

organization called World Hunger Year (WHY) to raise money and awareness of the problem. Chapin organized hundreds of charity concerts for the cause, but felt that money and publicity alone were not going to change policy. As an additional tactic, Ayers and Chapin put together a plan to lobby Congress to divert surplus U.S. food supplies to Africa (Coan 2001, 280–81; Swimmer 2005).

To learn how to access the powers in Washington and to establish meaningful alliances that might help support the effort, Chapin reached out to Ralph Na der, who had successfully pressured Congress to enact landmark public interest legislation. Chapin and Nader met at the apartment of Mark Green, manager of Ramsey Clark's 1976 U.S. senatorial bid. Upon meeting Chapin, Nader was not impressed. Nader had been burned by so many other "concerned stars," such as Marlon Brando, Linda Ronstadt, and Robert Lamm of Chicago, all of whom "had not been able to get beyond the point of doing a big splashy publicity thing" and make "a long-range commitment" to the cause. To Nader, Chapin seemed like all the rest (Coan 2001, 283–84).

When it seemed that recruiting Nader was a lost cause, Chapin asked if Nader had heard any of his music. Nader acknowledged that he had not, so Green handed Chapin a guitar that he kept at his apartment, and Chapin played "Cat's in the Cradle."

Nader was moved. "Well, that's something I could listen to," he said, charmed by the lyrics and the sincerity of Chapin's delivery.

Chapin saw his opening and related to Nader his own skepticism about celebrity activism, criticizing the American public's attitude toward problem solving as "event psychosis." "I mean," Chapin argued, "half the country thinks we solve our environmental problems on Earth Day, or racial problems with Peter, Paul and Mary singing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, or hunger with a Bangladesh concert. You have to be working in the process. Students ask me when world hunger will end, and I tell them it'll be decades before we really see a difference" (Coan 2001, 285).

He persuaded Nader to give him a chance. Chapin agreed to perform at fourteen Public Interest Research Group benefits, as well as the national convention in Washington, D.C., to help Nader raise money. In exchange, Nader advised WHY on organizing and provided Chapin with direct access to key government officials.

Chapin continued his outsider strategy: he made twenty appearances on the *Tonight Show,* organized multiple charity shows, and performed on the steps of the Capitol on the day of key votes. Because of his connections with

Nader, he was also able to execute an insider strategy where he lobbied members of Congress and President Carter to pass a bill establishing a Presidential Commission on Domestic and International Hunger. Carter appointed him to the commission, which led to the advancement of another congressional bill on food aid (Coan 2001, 280–85, 381; Marsh 1978). According to Minnesota congressman Rick Nolan, one of the key players in the effort:

> I've never seen anything like it. The traditional Washington lobbyist was well paid for the job he did and worked much slower and more casually. So to have a private citizen work the halls of Congress as effectively and comprehensively as he did was truly remarkable. In fact, he [Chapin] not only worked the halls of Congress effectively, he worked the administration effectively (Coan 2001, 389).

The Chapin story illustrates some of the sources of power summarized in the previous chapters as well as methods of agenda setting. Chapin, in his own words, was no George Harrison and could not attract the type of media attention that a Beatle could command. However, by playing concerts, allying with other celebrity musicians, and making regular media appearances, he raised awareness about world hunger, engaging in outsider media strategies. He also pursued a strong risk reduction strategy by allying himself with a network and institutions that could help him achieve his goals, efforts that would boost his credibility among activists like Nader and politicians on Capitol Hill and in the White House.

In this chapter, Chapin's story pushes celebrity influence a step further. Chapin was not only a credible celebrity who raised awareness about world hunger. He was a policy entrepreneur. In addition to pursuing an outsider strategy, he also pursued an insider "shakeout" strategy to build consensus around hunger policy in America. In this way, he attempted to open a policy window by affecting the "problem stream." Media attention, congressional attention, and presidential attention was—for a time—focused on addressing the world hunger problem, utilizing resources that might otherwise have been used for other projects in Chapin's absence. As a member of the presidential task force on hunger, Chapin took part in the "policy stream," working with members of Congress and the president to determine possible courses of action. He was also involved in the "political stream" when he actively lobbied public officials.[1] Unfortunately, his proposals became a

victim to the political stream when, in 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected president and Republicans took over the Senate, which altered legislative priorities and delayed congressional action for years. Chapin's death in an auto accident in 1981 also stalled progress on the issue. Whether he could have continued to be influential in that political environment is unknown. However, the organization he built with Ayers provided the framework for subsequent celebrity activists to carry on the work. When another policy window opened—the airing of a BBC news story that graphically depicted the famine and documented the deaths of a million people from the famine—rock musician Bob Geldof and others organized Band Aid and Live Aid. Harry Belafonte organized U.S. artists as USA for Africa, networking with Ken Kragen, Chapin's former manager, to work in conjunction with WHY (Coan 2001; Crosby and Bender 2000, 151–53). So Chapin and Ayers's network and organizing provided the infrastructure that enabled some of the biggest charity events of the 1980s. The U.S. government changed its policy toward Ethiopia and began offering developmental aid by May 1985.

Chapin's efforts illustrate how some celebrities have employed strategies beyond those documented in chapters 3 and 4 to influence the political process. Specifically, this chapter sheds light on celebrities' power of persuasion. Just as Chapin was able to persuade activists and public officials to address the issue of global hunger, celebrities attempt to persuade public audiences and policy makers. The impact of celebrity endorsements is not obvious (Brubaker 2011; M. C. Campbell 2012; Garthwaite and Moore 2008; D. J. Jackson and Darrow 2005; Pease and Brewer 2008). One assumes that politicians can be persuasive when taking political positions. Celebrities are entertainers. Is it possible for entertainers to be persuasive on issues of public policy, or is Chapin's story merely anecdotal? The purpose of this chapter is to discover whether a celebrity can change minds or even effectively call citizens to action. If a celebrity is persuasive, s/he may significantly influence audiences, public opinion, voters, and even policymakers.

CELEBRITY PERSUASION: THE EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

In this study, 887 study participants were asked questions about celebrities' and politicians' credibility in specific policy areas.[2] Part of the study also

involved an experimental static-group comparison research design that evaluated whether a celebrity advocating a particular issue could persuade respondents to accept a policy position. This study is the focus of chapter 5.

One version of the celebrity persuasion survey was given to a control group, which was exposed to generally balanced information about a political issue. Another group—an experimental group—was given exactly the same information, plus a frame where the celebrity took a position on the issue. That is, the respondents would read the same excerpt, but in their version it would end with a celebrity like George Clooney explaining why the reader should agree with him. All groups were asked exactly the same questions about how they felt about the issue. If the experimental group and the control group responded differently, then one could conclude that the frame had an impact on the thinking of respondents, and the celebrity was persuasive. Multiple versions of the survey were constructed, each focusing on a different issue and a different celebrity.

For example, one control survey offered information about the conflict in Syria, presenting reasons for and against military intervention by the United States. No frame or slant was offered, and respondents were asked questions about whether they supported a military intervention. The corresponding experimental survey, administered to a different group, offered the same information, but concluded with a fictitious quote from Angelina Jolie, offering reasons why the U.S. should intervene militarily. Respondents in the experimental group were then asked to answer the same questions as the control group answered including the Jolie pro-intervention frame.

One would expect that people who already have strong opinions about this issue might not be moved. Likewise, partisans might follow the side of the argument that they presume their own party would take. In short, there are many reasons why respondents would not necessarily be persuaded by a celebrity or any other spokesperson. The control group results offer a baseline of how a random group might respond to a set of questions about Syrian intervention without any particular push one way or the other. The experimental group's results offer a contrast. Either the celebrity frame was persuasive, or it was not. If the celebrity frame persuaded respondents, it offers some support for the hypothesis that celebrities can be persuasive on political issues compared to the group that received no nudge from a celebrity.

While it is reasonable to assume that the celebrity is the variable affecting a change of attitude in this experiment, it is difficult to separate message

from messenger. Much scholarship in the media and public opinion literature suggests that in experimental surveys, frames themselves affect the thinking of respondents (Brubaker 2011;M. D. Cobb and Kuklinski 1997; Iyengar 1994; Jerit 2008; Kuklinski and Hurley 1994; Schuck and Vreese 2009; Zald 1996; Zaller 1992, 1996). In other words, anyone can offer a proposal and a reason to support that proposal, and experimental subjects may be persuaded whether the person doing the persuasion is a celebrity, a mayor, or a "man on the street." In this study, it was important to prove that it really is the celebrity persuasion that affects attitudes, not just a cleverly phrased argument. If a frame alone, without any celebrity or politician's name attached, is capable of persuading a target audience, how can one determine that a celebrity making a statement will be more persuasive than the statement itself? Two innovations were introduced into the design to address this question.

First, the basic issue description used in both control and experimental groups included multiple reasons to offer opposing policy options. Thus, respondents were required to evaluate the issue intelligently before answering any questions about it. For a respondent to agree with a celebrity frame, s/he would have already wrestled with the issue, making the introduction of the celebrity name the key difference between control and experimental groups, and making it less likely that the celebrity name or statement could manipulate them. This also raised the bar for celebrity persuasion, ensuring that ideological and party identification cues might be allowed to compete with a celebrity's opinions. The point of the experiment is not for celebrities to persuade the feebleminded or uninformed, but to try to engage subjects who are in a systematic mode of thought and might also be prone to partisan biases, building the most difficult case for celebrity persuasion.[3] If the results of the experiment proved that party identification was a greater determinant of answers, or that respondents were thinking more independently about the issue and not following the celebrity frame, this would be evident in the data.

Second, a "super control" group was surveyed to compare their responses to control and experimental groups. This group was treated to the same information and questions as the other two groups. The difference was that the super control group's framed statement was attributed not to a specific celebrity but to an unnamed "noted celebrity." In that way, a comparison could be made between respondents exposed to no celebrity endorsement

(control), respondents exposed to an unnamed celebrity endorsement (super control), and respondents exposed to a named celebrity endorsement (experimental). Introduction of the super control made it possible to observe whether the content of the argument was persuasive, or if the specific celebrity was persuasive.[4] As a result, the method could produce fewer significant results, but those that were significant would be more definitive.[5]

One set of questions attempted to measure attitudinal variation: can a celebrity affect the attitudes of those exposed to the frame? Can the celebrity persuade a respondent to believe his/her argument, such as a decision to intervene militarily in Syria? A second set of questions attempted to measure respondents' proclivity toward taking concrete action in response to the frame: would the respondent vote for someone or give money to someone who supports military intervention in Syria? Could the celebrity convince the respondent to do so? The purpose of these questions was to determine whether celebrities could affect attitudes and/or motivate respondents to take action.

Because of the ambiguity of some of the celebrities' political orientations and positions, different versions of the experimental survey had celebrities "flipping sides." For example, on an experimental group, Clooney is quoted as being in favor of intervention in Syria. In another, he is opposed to it. Indeed, most celebrities in the study advocated on both sides of issues across different experimental groups.[6] The purpose, in part, was to determine whether celebrities could be persuasive irrespective of the position they advocate, particularly if the position is inconsistent with what a respondent might expect from them. Could the celebrity still persuade when advocating against expectations?

To determine factors that might affect celebrity persuasion, I also took two environmental factors into consideration: issue importance and divisiveness of the issue. If an issue is highly salient in public discourse, that is, if people know about the issue and care about the issue, are they more subject to celebrity persuasion? Likewise, are celebrities more persuasive on highly divisive issues or on issues where people do not have extremely polarized opinions? To measure celebrity referent power, as described in chapter 2, respondents were also asked about the perceived authenticity of celebrities. Does the authenticity of celebrities affect their ability to persuade people?

One might expect celebrities to have great difficulty persuading people to accept political positions. While experiments were conducted on multiple

issues with many celebrities, the next sections focus on two cases discussed in the credibility study in chapter 4: Syrian intervention and same-sex marriage. In the case of same-sex marriage, highly credible celebrities outranked politicians. Thus, one might expect that celebrities would be more persuasive on this issue. In the Syrian intervention case, Clooney and Jolie's credibility was not particularly different from politicians' credibility across the board, except that Jolie was favored by Democrats on this issue over Republican public officials. On this national security issue where celebrity credibility is comparable but not better than public officials' credibility, celebrities might be less persuasive. Thus, this chapter will compare the results of a least likely and a most likely case for celebrity persuasion. Some of the other cases will be discussed in the analysis of aggregate data.

CELEBRITIES AND FOREIGN POLICY: THE CASE FOR (AND AGAINST) SYRIAN INTERVENTION

During the time of this study, one of the most covered stories in the news was the Syrian civil war. As a foreign policy story that did not directly involve U.S. troops, public discourse followed predictable patterns. Most were horrified by government oppression, violence, and human rights abuses, and some believed that the war in Syria had potential to threaten U.S. security interests. Some high-profile Democrats and Republicans argued that the United States should intervene militarily in the conflict by increasing support to rebel groups, providing air support, sending advisors, or pursuing stronger options. These advocates argued that the Obama administration had not done enough to oppose the Syrian regime and support the factions opposing the government. Others questioned whether the war in Syria was truly a security crisis for the United States and predicted a potential quagmire if the United States committed military force as it had in Iraq and Afghanistan, or supported disorganized rebel groups that seemed to have ties to extremist Islamists. While news about Syria was plentiful, the public did not seem to demand immediate action in Syria, in part because of an increased concern over domestic economic issues and a hesitation to return large numbers of military forces to the Middle East. This study intended to discover whether celebrity activists could move attitudes and potentially inspire action on this issue.

Respondents were asked, “What is the likelihood that you would support U.S. military intervention in Syria?” Figure 5.1 presents the results. The celebrities’ pro-intervention mean scores are clearly higher than the control score, meaning that both celebrities were able to convince people that intervention was the best policy. Likewise, the anti-intervention numbers are lower than the control, indicating that both celebrities pushed people to resist intervention. More specifically, when Clooney and Jolie advocated in favor of intervention, the mean scores reported by the experimental group exceeded that of the control group. On the anti-Syrian intervention frame, Clooney and Jolie performed better than the control. On the pro-intervention side, Clooney performed better than Jolie. On the anti-intervention side, Jolie performed better than Clooney. Even respondents’ feelings about Jolie or Clooney do not detract from their ability to persuade. Even people who personally dislike or express apathy toward these celebrities are potentially susceptible to their persuasion.[7]

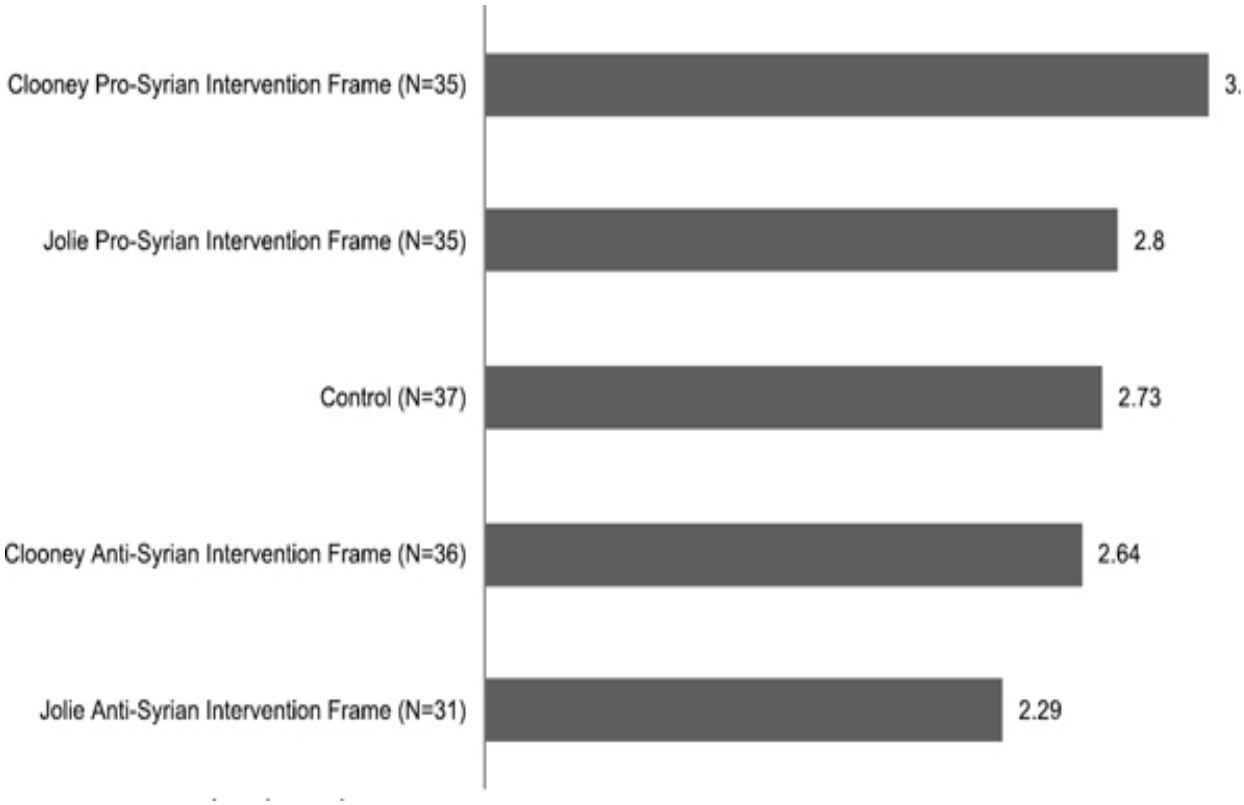


Figure 5.1. Likelihood of Supporting a Military Intervention in Syria

Next, respondents were asked to take a hypothetical action, and the results are reported in figure 5.2. When asked about the likelihood that a respondent would vote for a public official supporting military intervention in Syria, again, the mean scores align in a clear pattern. Clooney and Jolie persuaded people to vote for a pro-intervention candidate when advocating in favor of intervention, and they made people less likely to vote for a pro-intervention candidate when advocating against intervention. Additional statistical analysis suggests that Republican Party affiliation was a stronger determinant of a respondent's likelihood to support a pro-intervention public official. Thus Clooney and Jolie's statements did not influence Republicans, likely because they had already made up their minds and independently agreed with the pro-intervention position. In addition, chapter 4 revealed that Republicans did not regard Clooney as highly credible. Still, Clooney and Jolie were more likely than the control group to persuade respondents not to support a public official advocating intervention.[8] On both questions, statistical analysis suggests that the super control variable—the script where a "noted celebrity" tries to make the case for or against Syrian intervention—does not significantly affect these outcomes.[9]

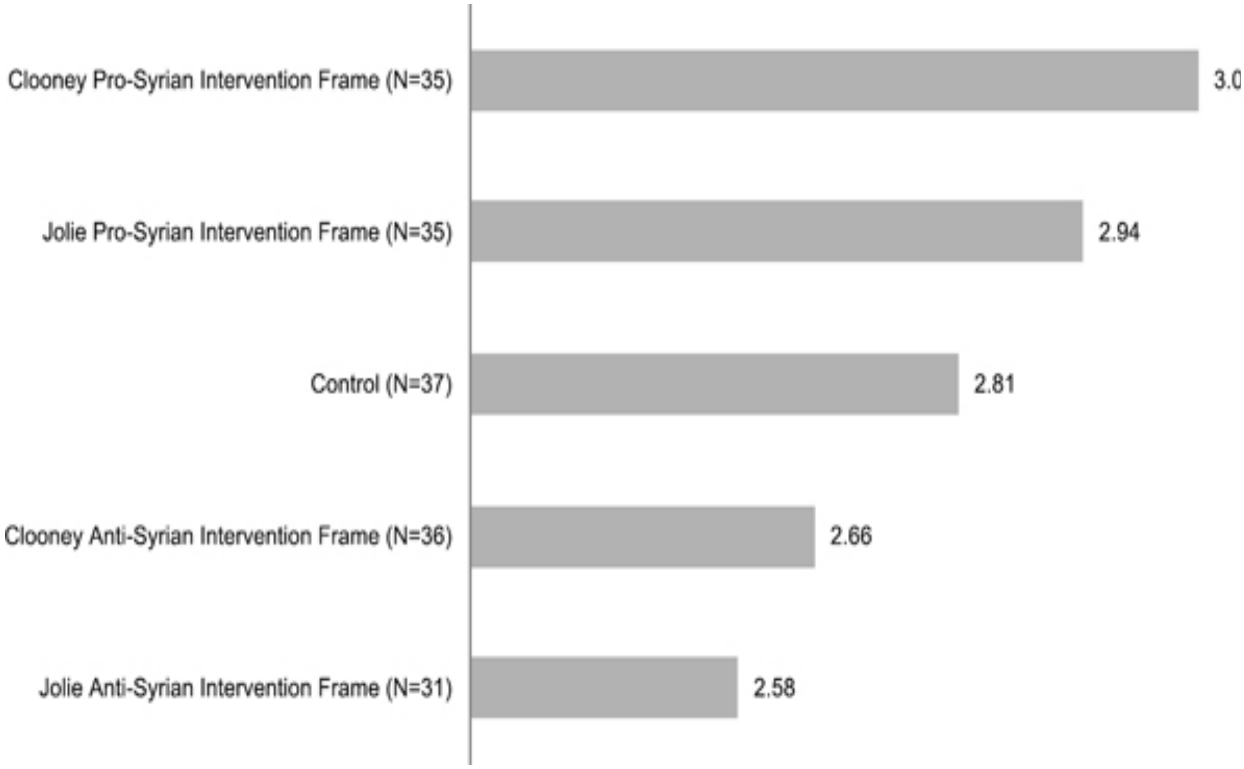


Figure 5.2 Likelihood of Supporting a Pro-Intervention Public Official

In chapter 4, Clooney's credibility was indistinguishable from politicians' credibility on this issue, suggesting that respondents would consider him no more or less credible than Obama, Clinton, Rubio, or Trump. The only exception was that Republicans did not find Clooney particularly credible. Jolie, on the other hand, was ranked as most credible on some lists and had credibility scores that were significantly higher than some of the politicians on the list and comparable to President Obama's credibility. These results seem consistent with the findings of this experimental study.

CELEBRITIES AND DOMESTIC ADVOCACY: THE CASE FOR (AND AGAINST) SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Same-sex marriage was a highly salient issue at the time of this study. Shortly after the study, the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples could not be denied benefits and that it would not intervene against states like California that had laws supporting same-sex marriage (Liptak 2013). It was not the definitive ruling legalizing same-sex marriage that would follow in 2015, but it was the first of several major rulings that climaxed with that decision. Unlike the Syrian war, this was a domestic policy issue, and Americans were quite aware of the controversy. While public opinion seemed to shift in favor of more Americans being tolerant of same-sex marriage, those who disagreed were as adamant as ever in their opposition. It was a wedge issue for campaigning politicians in the previous several elections and a divisive front in the larger culture war. Thus, this case would prove a much more difficult case for celebrity persuasion. However, chapter 4 revealed that some celebrities, such as Ellen DeGeneres, were considered to be highly credible on this issue. Could celebrities affect people's attitudes toward same-sex marriage?

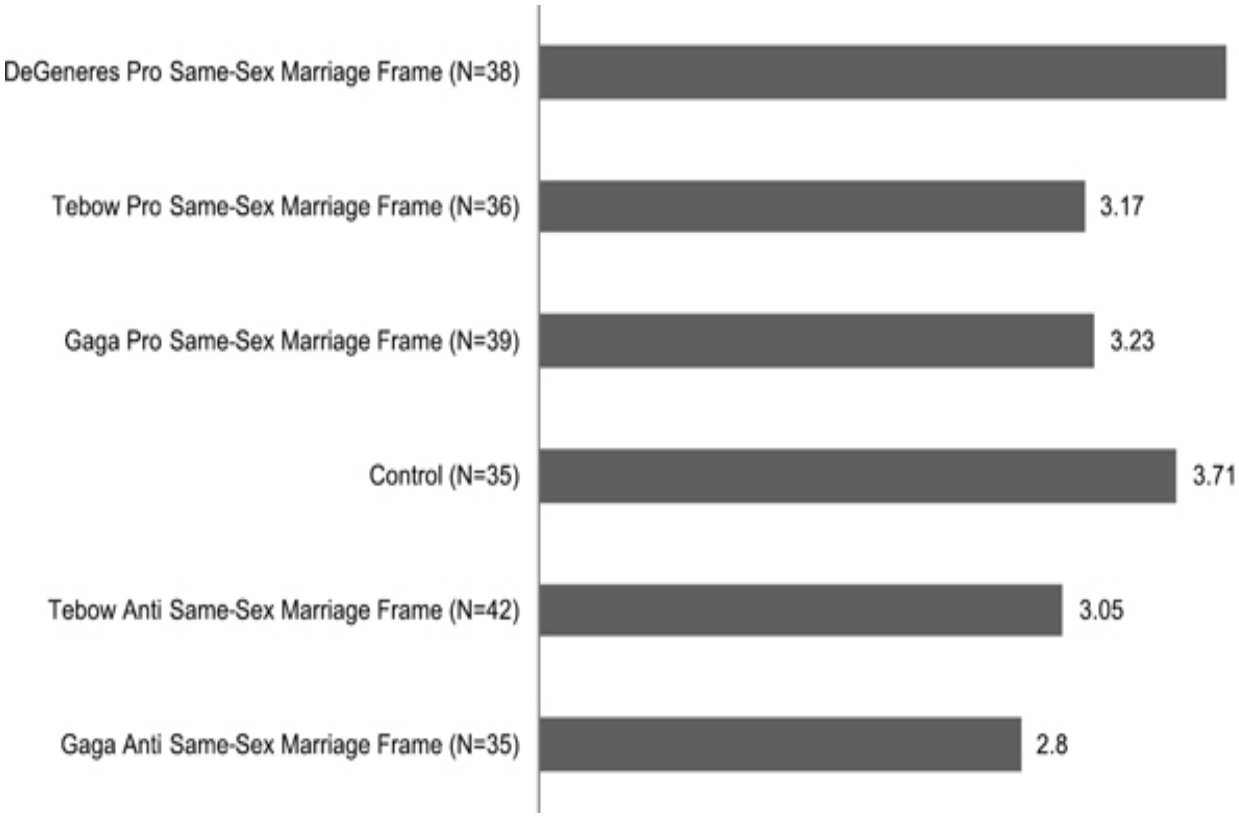


Figure 5.3 Likelihood of Supporting Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage

Figure 5.3 summarizes the initial findings from the same-sex marriage case. At a glance, the pattern offers a more complex picture than in the Syrian case. While the Syrian tables illustrate a cascading pattern where celebrities were able to push opinions in predictable directions, in this case, only DeGeneres was able to persuade the experimental group to support same-sex marriage.[10] The two celebrities who were unable to persuade audiences to support it, Tim Tebow and Lady Gaga, were successful in persuading the experimental group to oppose it.[11]

DeGeneres was not selected to advocate against same-sex marriage, because her sexual orientation is well-known. However, when respondents were exposed to the anti-same-sex marriage frame, Gaga and Tebow produced lower means than the control group mean, implying that Gaga and Tebow were capable of persuading respondents to oppose same-sex marriage.[12] Unlike the Syrian case, a respondent's feelings about the celebrity affected his/her likelihood to accept the frame.[13] Positive feelings about the celebrity made respondents more likely to support the direction advocated by the celebrity while negative feelings made them less likely. So

if the respondent really liked Lady Gaga, they were more likely to agree with her. The other key variable affecting responses was Republican Party affiliation. If respondents self-identified as Republicans, they were largely resistant to appeals to legalize same-sex marriage and likely to oppose it, independent of most other factors.[14] Just as in the Syrian case, Republicans appeared to be very set in their opinions, which meant that they were less subject to persuasion by anyone. In addition, statistical tests revealed that the super control variable was not a factor affecting respondents' attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

In chapter 4, DeGeneres was ranked as highly credible on this issue across parties. In this case, she was also proven to be very persuasive. Lady Gaga's and Tim Tebow's credibility rates were mixed. Gaga's means were significantly lower than DeGeneres's and Elton John's in the overall analysis but indistinguishable from the other political actors. These scores reinforce the results on persuasion. DeGeneres is clearly both credible and persuasive.

WHAT MAKES CELEBRITIES PERSUASIVE?

The previous cases illustrate that celebrities are capable of persuasion. Across most cases, celebrities' abilities to change attitudes appear to be stronger than their abilities to inspire action. This is not surprising, given that the study cannot measure whether a respondent will really act upon an endorsement, and given the assumption that affecting behaviors might just be more inherently difficult than changing minds. This tension was illustrated in some of the written comments on the surveys. When respondents were asked if they were more likely to give money to pro-gun control groups, one respondent marked a low score, but wrote next to that response, "I'm poor," implying that she would if she thought she could afford it. Another participant, responding to a question about the likelihood to volunteer money and time to help victims of hurricanes, wrote, "Not all of us are super rich and have nothing better to do with our time." In many cases, participants implied a desire to act on various issues, but seemed upset or conflicted about questions that asked for personal sacrifice.

The splitting of results within the same-sex marriage case and the differences in outcomes between the domestic and international cases introduce additional questions. Why are celebrities persuasive in some areas

and not in others? Are some celebrities more likely to persuade than others? Are there certain types of issues where celebrities are more or less likely to persuade? Does the divisiveness of the issue affect celebrities' ability to persuade? Does the level of salience of the issue affect their ability to persuade? What happens when celebrities advocate against expectations? For example, does Tebow lose his ability to persuade when he advocates in favor of same-sex marriage when people expect him to be opposed to it? Finally, does the perceived authenticity of the celebrity help his/her ability to persuade?

To answer these questions, I looked at statistical correlations between certain issue and celebrity characteristics and celebrity "wins."[15] Celebrities were assigned a "1" for a "win" on a question when respondents agreed with the celebrity's frame and those results were significant.[16] In other words, celebrities earned a win when they successfully persuaded their target audience. A "0" (or loss) was assigned if the celebrity failed to persuade the target audience in the predicted direction. In this way, this process yielded a celebrity win-loss record across sixty-two questions. To measure issue salience or perceived importance of an issue, I coded the results of Pew research polls indicating the issues that were of the greatest public importance at the time of the survey. I also constructed an "issue polarity" variable, presuming that celebrities would have a harder time persuading respondents on issues that were highly divisive, particularly among partisans. To measure authenticity, one of the survey questions asked respondents whether the celebrity's "talents, abilities, and professional projects" uniquely made him/her an "authentic spokesperson." Finally, a variable was constructed to determine whether respondents generally perceived that the celebrity believed the position s/he was advocating. This was particularly interesting given the results of some of the frames—that certain celebrities were able to persuade audiences on both sides of an issue.[17]

Results from this analysis indicate that the more prominent the issue is in the minds of the general populace, the more persuasive celebrities are.[18] Second, highly polarized issues are negatively correlated with celebrity success, suggesting that celebrities are persuasive on topics that do not serve as wedge issues for either major political party.[19] Third, authenticity is positively related to persuasion, implying that those celebrities who were rated as highly authentic based upon their talents and abilities tended to be

more persuasive.[20] Fourth, a celebrity's expected beliefs on an issue seem to have no bearing on their ability to persuade.[21] Thus even if respondents believe that Clooney is against intervention in Syria, they are still open to his persuasion no matter which side he advocates.[22]

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF CELEBRITY PERSUASION

The data presented in these chapters painted a picture of celebrities who are capable of commanding media attention and who are, in varying circumstances, quite capable of persuading target audiences to support a cause. Jolie and Clooney could convince experimental groups to change their position on Syrian intervention and even influence their likelihood of taking some action on the issue. DeGeneres, Tebow, and Gaga—to different degrees—persuaded experimental groups to change their attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

When looking at the sum of the sixty-two versions of questions asked of the experimental groups across ten issue areas, the data conclude that certain variables affect the ability of celebrities to persuade audiences. Celebrities were more persuasive on issues perceived to be of great public importance at the time of the survey, suggesting that celebrities are most effective when they speak on already salient issues. It may also imply that their ability to increase the salience of an issue in the media through spotlighting, as documented in chapter 3, might be connected to their ability to persuade. Perhaps their ability to raise awareness gives them another level of credibility or expert power on that issue.

Celebrities are also most likely to be persuasive when the issue is not polarizing. This was revealed not only by the quantitative results but also from some of the written comments and caveats from respondents. The gun control question, for example, drew slogans such as "People kill, not guns" or statements such as "Those who want guns will still get them." It is unlikely that any celebrity advocating for gun control will convince respondents such as these. In short, celebrities do better when there is some room for attitudinal change. If people have already made their minds up about an issue, celebrities are less likely to affect attitudes.

Moreover, celebrities who are perceived as authentic are persuasive, and that authenticity is tied to their entertainment ability. According to one

respondent, “I think a celebrity’s authenticity in their art form and life also gives credibility to their political views. Sting’s music is authentic, and he is true to his genre of music.” Just as Harry Chapin was able to reach activists and politicians through his music, celebrities’ abilities offer a degree of authenticity that is related to their persuasive abilities.

Quantitative and qualitative data seem to support respondent ambivalence about celebrities’ consistency with an expected position. Jolie is more persuasive when advocating against Syrian intervention whereas Clooney seems to move attitudes when advocating either position. Both of them command hypothetical action more persuasively when advocating against intervention. Tebow and Gaga seem to be most persuasive when advocating against same-sex marriage. This might be a natural fit for Tebow, whom many Christian conservatives like because of his public prayer position in the end zone, known as “Tebowing.” Similarly, advocating for same-sex marriage seemed to be an uncomfortable fit for him. Next to the pro-same-sex marriage frame, one conservative participant in an experimental group wrote, “Did Tebow really say this? If this is true, I have lost a significant amount of respect for him.” Likewise, based on Gaga’s public advocacy of pro-gay issues, one would expect her to be less credible and “playing against type” when making anti-gay statements. A contrary result on some questions was surprising.

Finally, credibility seems to play a role in persuasion, although it is not clear exactly how that relationship works. Intuitively, one would presume that advocates who are more credible would be more persuasive or that advocates who lack credibility might be less persuasive. In some preliminary analyses of the data, authenticity was found to be positively related to credibility.[23] However, credibility scores and rankings do not seem to capture persuasiveness. Some celebrities may be distinctly more credible than some politicians, but that does not mean that politicians would be incapable of persuasion if they were included in this experimental study. Likewise, Clooney and Jolie’s credibility was indistinguishable from the politicians on the Syrian case, according to the results in chapter 4. However, their low rankings did not stop them from being persuasive on this issue. This implies that if politicians were used in place of celebrities in this study, we might find that they would perform as well as celebrities did. In addition, we do not know what credibility score on this issue would be sufficient to prevent a celebrity or a politician from being persuasive on this issue.

Perhaps other politicians or celebrities would have ranked much lower on that list and might have been less persuasive in an experimental study such as this one. In short, the findings in chapter 4 are interesting and prove that celebrities can be as credible as politicians. This implies that celebrities are able to work with the media and audiences in a way that rivals politicians. Credibility likely feeds persuasion. However, this study does not reveal a clear threshold that determines how much credibility is necessary to achieve a reasonable degree of persuasiveness. Ultimately, the surprising central finding of this chapter is not whether politicians can be more or less persuasive than celebrities, but that celebrities indeed can be persuasive on issues of political importance.

The final chapter will summarize the major discoveries of this study, discuss further implications, and consider directions for future research. This chapter will revisit the basic research question and determine how these pieces may support and qualify the case for celebrity influence.

6.The Times They Are A-Changin’: Celebrity Power Revisited

In 1969, John Lennon, one of the most recognizable celebrities in the world, left the Beatles to pursue a solo career and a series of political events that, for a celebrity, had not been witnessed since the days of the great singer, actor, and athlete Paul Robeson. Robeson had been blacklisted in the 1950s because of his strong pro–civil rights stances and criticism of the U.S. government. After years of harassment by the CIA, he went into seclusion in 1963. Lennon hoped to fare better. However, the news media establishment of the 1960s was still fairly hostile to youth culture, as evidenced by the 1967 CBS documentary *The Hippie Temptation*, and the political environment was characterized by government crackdowns on protesters such as at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.[1]

While Lennon and the other Beatles had been openly opinionated about political issues such as civil rights and the Vietnam War, Lennon’s departure from the Beatles signaled his desire for radical activism. At a “bed-in” for peace in Montreal with his new wife, artist Yoko Ono, Lennon said, “You gotta remember, establishment, it’s just a name for evil. The monster doesn’t care whether it kills all the students or whether there’s a revolution.” By 1971 Lennon’s song “Power to the People” articulated a lyrical response to the “monster”—a response that had been expressed through his performance art and political protests over the previous two years: “Say you want a revolution? We better get it on right away. Well, you get on your feet and into the street” (Leaf and Scheinfeld 2007; Whitehead 2000).

Left-wing radicals, such as Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, and Black Panther chairman Bobby Seale, gravitated toward Lennon and began organizing a series of concerts running up to the 1972 Republican National Convention to gain media attention, change public opinion, and prevent President Richard Nixon from being reelected. The FBI was listening.

Declassified files reveal intrusive spying and a paranoid Nixon administration seeking to "neutralize" Lennon because of concerns that Lennon might disrupt Nixon's chances of winning (A. Cohen 2006; Gross 2010; Leaf and Scheinfeld 2007; Parker 2003; Partridge 2005; Whitehead 2000; Wiener 2000, 2010).[2]

Lennon and his associates organized a smaller concert in Ann Arbor in December 1971 to test the strategy. Instead of focusing on Nixon and the election, they took on the cause of John Sinclair, the White Panther leader who was sentenced to ten years in prison for possession of two marijuana cigarettes in 1969. The "John Sinclair Freedom Rally" featured musical performances by Stevie Wonder, Phil Ochs, Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band, and John Lennon in his first live U.S. performance since 1966. Also featured were speeches by Lennon, Rubin, Seale, poet Allen Ginsberg, and others. Three days later, Sinclair was released, and on March 9, 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the law used to penalize Sinclair, liberalizing the sentencing of marijuana use (Buchanan 2011; "Freed Poet Hails Michigan Ruling; Sees Victory in Reversal of Marijuana Conviction" 1972; Salpukas 1971; Thomson and Gutman 1987, 190–94; Wiener 2010).

The full anti-Nixon tour, however, was never to be. In response to this victory, the Nixon administration attempted to deport Lennon. The White House argued that he had been admitted to the United States improperly, since immigration law banned the admission of anyone convicted of any drug offense, referring to Lennon's guilty plea to a misdemeanor cannabis possession charge in London in 1968. Celebrity artists appealed to the INS on Lennon's behalf, including singers Joan Baez and Bob Dylan; beat poet Gregory Corso; writers John Updike, Joseph Heller, and Joyce Carol Oates; painter Jasper Johns; actor Tony Curtis; and composers John Cage and Leonard Bernstein. New York mayor John Lindsay supported Lennon, and thousands wrote letters in his defense, solicited by the liner notes in Lennon's 1972 album, *Some Time in New York City* (Thomson and Gutman 1987, 191; Wiener 1991, 2010).

The deportation hearings continued for as long as Nixon remained in office. In 1975, a three-judge panel ruled that Lennon's London conviction did not meet America's standards of justice and granted him his green card (Wiener 2010).[3] At that point, however, it was too late for Lennon's antiestablishment efforts. The hearings may not have deported Lennon, but they did distract, stymie, and exhaust his attempts to organize. There were no

political concerts after the Ann Arbor event. His energy was focused on staying in the country, fighting a battle that took a toll on his marriage and his health. By the time he received his green card, Lennon not only was finished with activism but had retired from the music business to be a stay-at-home dad with his infant son, Sean, while Yoko Ono managed their business interests (Leaf and Scheinfeld 2007).

The case of John Lennon is not a perfect analogy that illustrates every lesson learned from this book. However, it highlights the promise and limitations of celebrity activism. A concerned celebrity commits himself to a cause. He utilizes his media skills and art to persuade others to follow his cause. He connects himself to organizers. He attracts media attention.[4] His efforts can even be connected to a political result, the release of John Sinclair. Lennon's ability to work with his advocacy group to organize and achieve results were even threatening enough for the president of the United States to spy on him and mobilize a government agency to block his efforts. This final point is important: there are limits to any sort of activism, and powerful politicians and government institutions can still dominate or shut down their efforts (Sikkink 2004, 156). Lennon's story is consistent with the findings of this book, but it also pushes its boundaries. In the following sections, the case of John Lennon will be revisited as this final chapter probes the results and limitations of this research, along with broader implications and areas for future study.

THE PUZZLE: THREE PRESIDENTS AND THREE CELEBRITIES

The first chapter began with a seemingly ridiculous picture of an American president jokingly standing at attention for a rock-star activist. This interplay of occasional cooperation, criticism, anger, and humor characterized a growing relationship between George W. Bush and Bono on a limited set of political issues, and illustrated how they were able to work together and achieve goals as "pals," to use Bush's language.

The final chapter began with a more sobering picture of an American president secretly crushing the efforts of a rock-star activist. This contrast illustrates the central puzzle of this book. It is not at all surprising that the Nixon administration would turn the establishment against John Lennon and

win. What is more surprising is that Lennon scored some victories, and that the Nixon administration saw him as a genuine threat. Most would have predicted that Lennon would have little impact, certainly in 1971, when tabloid television news was still a fairly distant prospect and celebrity headlines belonged in entertainment news (Walls 2001).

Before we dismiss this attitude as a relic of the early 1970s, we might remember the other big story from the first chapter: a celebrity activist became president. Donald Trump had seemingly little credibility among the mainstream when he was hammering the birther issue in 2011. By 2017, he was taking the oath of office. People are still shocked, deconstructing the events of 2016 to figure out exactly how this happened. For this reason, the puzzle is a sign of the changing times, as implied by the discussion in chapter 2 about the transforming news media and entertainment business. Celebrities have become more acceptable in newsrooms and in the Oval Office than they were in 1972.

Nixon's encounter with a friendlier celebrity is illustrative of this difference. Elvis Presley requested a meeting with Nixon, held on December 21, 1970. In that meeting Presley told Nixon that "the Beatles had been a real force for anti-American spirit" and that "the Beatles came to this country, made their money, and then returned to England where they promoted an anti-American theme."[5] Nixon expressed "surprise" about Presley's comments. It is not clear whether Presley persuaded Nixon that Lennon was a threat. While Presley disrespected "anti-Americanism," he was more concerned that drug use promoted antiestablishmentarianism, a theme that must have resonated with Nixon, given his campaign to increase criminalization of drug use.

Unlike the more outspoken younger musicians of the late 1960s, Presley promised a low-key approach—to reach kids with his anti-drug message in his own way by "just singing" (Krogh 1970). At Presley's request, the meeting with Nixon was kept secret. The president probably agreed with the secrecy, since he repeatedly expressed his concern that Presley needed to "retain his credibility," implying that Presley's credibility would be undermined if the meeting were made public.

A year later, the story was leaked, but it did not become big news. The now famous photo of Presley and Nixon shaking hands and the details of the meeting were not released until 1988. That a president did not capitalize on a photo op with a celebrity is surprising by today's standards. What is even

more surprising is that the 1971 leak did not proliferate into headlines across print and broadcast news. However, in the early 1970s, the political news media were not nearly as receptive to celebrity and entertainment stories as they are today (Carlson 2010). Indeed, a photo op with a celebrity—and news that Nixon was actually listening to Presley's counsel on drugs and crime—might have been seen as detrimental to both at the time. Unlike today's reports of Bush consulting with Bono or Obama consulting with Clooney, no one would have expected Nixon to take Presley seriously. Despite a media and political environment that was either neutral or hostile to celebrity political activists, Lennon was still able to capitalize on that environment in a way that made a presidential administration nervous. Nixon's victories over Lennon buried the historical narrative that a celebrity had the potential for significant influence, even in the early 1970s. Lennon was sidelined, just as Robeson had been twenty years earlier.

When Bono appeared with Bush at Gleneagles more than thirty years later, the media and political environment had changed substantially. The world of "pseudo-events" described by Boorstin (1992) had come to fruition. "Infotainment" merged tabloid-style journalism, salacious "reality" stories, celebrity gossip, and public relations with traditional political news. Not only did entertainment and news merge but stories with high entertainment value began to compete with less interesting stories of public importance. Boring stories were sensationalized to make them seem more interesting. By 2005, the incongruous pictures of the rock star and the conservative politician were not completely surprising, but they were definitely interesting. Bono had the potential to bring attention and excitement to a boring G8 conference that focused on an issue that carried little interest to most Americans: debt relief to developing countries.

Bono's approach was clearly different from Lennon's. Lennon was at odds with the establishment, and at that time a president would not treat a celebrity as a serious policy partner anyway. In 2005, Bono hoped to ally with the president and push him to accept his agenda. This strategy was illustrative of another major transformation in the entertainment and news industries: that the celebrity and politician both became identifiable commodities for hungry media consumers. Both capitalized on fame and the fertilization of a public image. Bono was influential in his own realm, a realm that overlapped with Bush's. Thus, no one in the media or the public in 2005 was interested in burying or ignoring Bono's potential influence as with Lennon in 1972. Bono's activism was tantalizing, although not nearly

as entertaining as the 2016 Trump campaign or the daily drama of the Trump administration. Trump's serious political actions and informal tweets have become institutionalized celebrity news. It is the Trump Show.

Ironically, while the media, the public, and even the politicians began to take celebrities seriously, the cynical scholars were the holdouts. If celebrities were merely eye candy for news stories, and if politicians did not take them seriously, why should political scientists do so? Nontraditional political actors such as celebrities are curiosities for tabloid entertainment news and, in the words of Sabato, only to be taken seriously by "blithering idiots." The study of political science is biased toward a picture of the world that presumes that those with the most political power are most likely and able to set the public agenda. Political scientists expect a world where activists have great difficulty advancing their political interests—or in Trump's case, a world where candidates without experience in public office lose elections. In the real world of politics, when John Lennon's David meets Nixon's Goliath, David loses. Thus, even in 2005, few scholars expected that Bono could make a difference on debt relief. The notion of Bono and Bush as long-term policy partners seemed so far-fetched that the phenomenon of celebrity influence has been a nonissue in political science literature until recent years. One purpose of this book is to test the bounds of this cynicism and to question whether celebrities are analogous to small people with slings.

This book suggests that the changing nature of the media environment has created new opportunities for celebrities to engage in activism and that their ability to spotlight and credibly persuade enables them to set public agendas. These findings potentially upend what many political scientists assume about power. Politicians do not necessarily have an edge in media manipulation, and celebrity policy entrepreneurs working with activists and transnational advocacy networks may accelerate the ability of groups to mobilize, attract attention, persuade, and potentially gain access to powerful elites.

WHAT POWER?

Lennon and Bono do not have the same power or influence as Nixon or Bush or now Trump. However, the results from this book demonstrate that

celebrities have the potential to be very influential. In order to understand how Lennon could be a threat to Nixon or how Bono could be an asset to Bush, chapter 2 offered French and Raven's typology to compare the potential powers of celebrities and politicians across several dimensions: legitimate power, expert power, reward/coercive power, informational power, and referent power. The following sections will itemize these forms of power and use them as a structure for summarizing the major findings of this book.

No Legitimacy

Legitimate power is, by definition, the domain of public officials. Nixon and Bush had formal institutional power that Lennon or Bono could not access. As a result, those celebrities that do not seek public office are essentially activists. The main difference between celebrities and regular activists is that celebrities have greater resources and visibility. This may bring great advantages to a movement but may also jeopardize the movement if they are not completely committed, if they fail to stay on message, or if their personal lives damage their public image.

Expertise Compensated

Celebrities generally engage in activism as an avocation. Lennon and Bono may have been passionate, but they did not have the political and policy expertise of politicians who immerse themselves in political careers on a full-time basis, learning what they need in order to satisfy their constituents. The beginning of the Trump administration, likewise, demonstrated how lack of expertise can stymie the efforts of a public official.

On some issues, celebrities are seen as more credible than politicians. This finding is reflected not only in the aggregate data but also when broken down by party affiliation. Republicans, Democrats, and independents all respond favorably to celebrities, although not all celebrities are seen as equally credible. Celebrities such as Bruce Springsteen and Willie Nelson draw support from different groups. Angelina Jolie and Elton John draw support from across the political spectrum.

What is the source of this credibility? Chapter 2 summarizes two approaches for celebrities to substitute or gain expertise: experience and

institutionalization. The findings in chapter 4 suggest that these are appropriate substitutes. Celebrities who are personally tied to an issue or seek specialized knowledge on an issue are perceived as more credible. Likewise, celebrities who are affiliated with advocacy networks are seen as more credible as well. Bono does not act alone. He surrounds himself with experts who educate him and do the groundwork necessary to advance the cause. Likewise, whether Lennon's connections with Rubin and Seales translated to perceived expertise, his affiliation with them automatically connected him to a network that had already been working on radical causes since the mid-1960s. Therefore, it is likely that a celebrity's "expert power" may be important to his/her ability to persuade.

The data also imply that credibility tends to reinforce persuasiveness, at least in some cases. For example, Ellen DeGeneres was highly credible and capable of persuading respondents on the same-sex marriage frame. However, this is not true in all circumstances. Elton John was not more persuasive when advocating for greater federal funding for AIDS, even though respondents regarded him as highly credible on this issue. Thus, the rankings and scores from chapter 4 do not definitively draw a line that proves that a certain amount of credibility is essential for persuasion.

Celebrities Coerce and Reward

Public officials have coercive and reward power. The fact that the Nixon administration could utilize bureaucracies to neutralize Lennon is not surprising. However, celebrities also have the capacity to coerce or reward public officials. One way is through money and resources. Most celebrities have these in abundance, which gives them a means to give money or threaten to cut it off from campaigns of public officials. There are documented cases of celebrity political donations, but it is as difficult to document the connection between money and outcomes in these cases as it is in the interest group literature. Indeed, studies thus far do not directly connect celebrity donations with influence over public officials. In addition, if money is the source of a celebrity's power, that makes them no different from other citizens who have money but lack the skills and fame of celebrities. Therefore, this is a source of celebrity power, but it is not unique to celebrities, and thus far the data to document it have not been readily

available. If the data could be gathered, this connection between money and celebrity power could be a rich area for future potential research.

Celebrities' abilities to coerce or reward may lie more in language, technology, and public access than in material resources. They may engage in leverage or accountability politics by holding public officials to promises or pressuring them to change policies. Chapter 2 offered some empirical examples of celebrities such as Bono and "Little" Steven Van Zandt effectively "shaming" the powerful. The actions of Lennon and his associates at the John Sinclair Freedom Rally involved shaming as well, to some apparent positive effect. However, if celebrities' power of coercion and reward is linked to credibility, gaining public attention, and persuading others, then the final two sources of power, referent and information power, become extremely important. They explain how a celebrity connects with an audience and how they utilize information to attract attention and persuade. Nevertheless, more research is necessary to connect spotlighting and persuasion to coercive and reward politics. Hypothetically, one would have to engage in process tracing and some contextual research (Bates et al. 1998) in order to illustrate that these skills were indeed key to success.

The Power of Information: Spotlighting and Persuasion

Informational power refers to the ability of actors to quickly generate politically usable information and deliver it to the places where it is most effective. Through his popularity, Lennon grabbed the attention of the public. He deliberately constructed pseudo-events in the form of performance art—staging bed-ins, hosting public recording sessions, creating films, or appearing at press conferences in a bag—in order to capture media attention. During times when the traditional news media paid less attention, he turned his albums into sources of political information, and even purchased billboard space in every major city in the world with the printed slogan "War Is Over! If You Want It" (Athey and Deiter 2009; G. Matthews and Goodman 2013, 34; Mesch 2013, 78; Wiener 1991). Clearly the John Sinclair Freedom Rally was a well-placed, powerful, and persuasive example of information politics. Little is known exactly about the inside causes and circumstances that led to Sinclair's release, or if this event affected the judge's opinion. However, we do know that the event certainly

gained a lot of attention at the time, and that the outcome was favorable to the activists.

Chapter 3 offered strong evidence that celebrity interventions in advocacy campaigns result in significantly increased media coverage, from Bono advocating on AIDS or debt relief to Angelina Jolie discussing children's education, or George Clooney protesting violence in Darfur. Granted, celebrities are not the only figures who can generate a buzz by giving an interview or planning an event. Politicians are extremely adept at gaining attention, and the data reflect this reality, too.

One would expect celebrities to be experts at flogging their own projects. Politicians should be better at promoting political causes. Nevertheless, the data in chapter 3 reveal that celebrities perform better than politicians across media types. The relationship certainly holds true in broadcast media, where one might expect a bias toward celebrities with their demand for a higher degree of sensationalism and interest in avoiding the "visually unsatisfactory" stories. However, it is also true for newspapers, where concerns about static talking heads and providing enough action footage are irrelevant (Cook 2005, 2–3, 104; Epstein 1973, 261–63). Indeed, a story that is heavily covered in broadcast media but not covered at all in newspapers, such as the birth of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie's child in Namibia, can nevertheless increase the coverage of African education stories in newspapers without specific reference to Jolie or Pitt at all. A general public interest emerges around a topic that seems to cross media types.

One possible reason why celebrities gain more coverage than politicians may be their uniqueness. Politicians advocate on policies and issues of public importance all of the time. Celebrities do it less often, and their commitment is more limited in scope. They focus on specific issues and often participate in focused events. A celebrity gives a media organization an excuse to show viewers something unusual and potentially attractive, while informing them about a serious issue.

To some extent, this is consistent with advertising research suggesting that overexposure might limit one's media power. A celebrity may trump an overexposed politician, and an overexposed celebrity may not have traction, either. This might explain why Bono's spikes of media influence in chapter 3 were not as consistent or as large as those of George Clooney or Alicia Keys. Bono is, in some ways, an atypical celebrity activist—more likely to engage in long-term organizing and lobbying to supplement occasional high-profile events. He is a longtime advocate and policy insider who is consistently

visible over extended periods when discussing challenges of the developing world. Clooney advocates on Sudan but seems less exposed and more selective about his interventions. Keys has not received as much coverage, although her interventions have been powerful. Likewise, when viewers experience "tragedy fatigue" or are overexposed to an issue, perhaps an attractive, even sexy face can draw attention back toward it—again, a finding consistent with advertising research. While the data from chapter 3 implies these conclusions, the design does not absolutely verify them. Do overexposed celebrities and politicians attract less attention? Do more attractive faces revitalize a story? More research is necessary to answer these questions.

In addition, the more celebrities involved in an intervention, the more likely the intervention is to capture media attention. The same cannot be said for multiple politicians. Contrary to expectations, celebrities do not necessarily need politicians in order to increase attention on an issue. Indeed, politicians are the ones who likely benefit from "being seen" with celebrities, particularly in newspapers, considering that newspapers are less responsive to both politicians and celebrities than the broadcast media are. To some extent, this answers the question "Why would Bush take Bono seriously?" Besides the possible policy expertise Bono brings with his transnational advocacy network, the answer may be that Bono is better at spotlighting an issue than Bush is. In exchange for the attention gained on an issue where they have like interests, Bush may be willing to give Bono a seat at the table. Once at the table, he may have the opportunity to establish himself as a policy insider—bringing his advocates and experts with him—which may make him valuable in a way that extends beyond his ability to command media attention.

Thus, persuasion, another expression of informational power, is a potentially important aspect of agenda setting and even policymaking. Chapter 5 demonstrates some strengths and limitations of celebrity persuasion. First, some celebrities are very persuasive. Respondents who were exposed to persuasion by George Clooney, Angelina Jolie, Ellen DeGeneres, Lady Gaga, and Tim Tebow were more likely to accept their frame of the issue than control respondents who received information about an issue but no frame.

Not all celebrities were persuasive, or at least they were not persuasive enough. While many celebrity endorsements affected attitudes of respondents in predictable directions, means differences were not

statistically significant in all cases. One reason may be that the design forced celebrities to advocate using a central/systematic route of persuasion, which put those respondents in a more critical mental state when evaluating the issues (Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983). In reality, people often know very little about an issue before hearing a celebrity speak about it. Many who are exposed to celebrity persuasion may never go through the careful process of evaluating issues before listening to celebrities deliver one line about why the person ought to believe them.

Thus, this design may have been too rigid. Advertising often attempts to appeal to audiences through a peripheral route to prevent individuals from actively and intellectually engaging with the message (Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983). Perhaps if the study had been designed to prepare respondents to accept a peripheral route of persuasion, the celebrities might have been more effective by capitalizing on their key strengths: their entertainment value and their attractiveness. In the real media, consumers are treated to entertainment rather than the kind of challenging reading introduced in the surveys. This study made no effort to capitalize on the entertainment value of the celebrity for the purpose of persuasion. Attractiveness may have played a role in respondents' judgments, because a photo of the celebrity was included in each survey. However, photos were not selected based on their attractiveness. Instead, wherever possible, photos were introduced that presented the celebrity in professional attire, speaking at a press conference or at an interview. "Sexy" or entertaining images were avoided. Thus, the design could have been much more favorable to celebrity persuasion. Displaying attractive and entertaining video clips of a celebrity speaking about an issue in the larger context of the event itself might produce an even stronger effect than that presented in this book, a design that has been employed on a limited scale in other studies. However, the contribution of this book lies in its ability to demonstrate the validity of the hard case. Despite a difficult crucial design, many celebrities were quite persuasive, even in circumstances that were not at all favorable for them.

Moreover, celebrities could persuade their audiences when advocating on either side of an issue. George Clooney was capable of persuading participants whether he argued for or against the issue. Indeed, the aggregate analysis concluded that the perceived position of the celebrity did not affect the ability of the celebrity to persuade. One would expect Clooney to be less credible when advocating against participants' expectations. However, where

celebrities advocated on both sides of an issue, this expectation did not seem to hamper their success.

Chapter 5 also concludes that celebrities were more persuasive on issues that participants perceived as important, rather than those that were less salient. This implies a connection between celebrities' ability to spotlight and their ability to persuade. Issues that are more salient have greater potential for celebrity persuasion. The more effectively a celebrity spotlights an issue, the more persuasive s/he may be on that issue, although this is an area that requires additional research.

Referent Power: Connecting with Audiences and Communicating Authenticity

Referent power is the ability to be likable and relatable, an ability that most celebrities have. One cannot easily entertain without having a degree of attractiveness, charisma, talent, or an ability to draw attention. Celebrities also are admired for their authenticity, the way that a celebrity's art or ability can connect their image to his/her inner emotions, feelings, and personality to communicate a sense of honesty and sincerity. There is no doubt that Lennon had referent power. Between the power of his music and the power of his personality, Lennon had as much charisma as an entertainer can have. What can one do with referent power?

In practice, referent power connects a leader with followers—or in this case the image of a celebrity or politician as a consumable product with distant audiences. When celebrities or politicians connect in a parasocial relationship with audiences, the result is often that people speak about these distant figures as if they were personal acquaintances and even emulate or live vicariously through the public figure to make up for the life or qualities that regular people lack. The effect is likely more pronounced for celebrities than for most politicians, although more research is necessary to come to this conclusion.

Chapter 5 calls into question the notion that a celebrity's likability translates to persuasion. Across most cases, data derived from the "feeling thermometer" indicate no clear positive relationship between the way a person feels about a celebrity and the way that a person may feel about a political issue. Likability does not necessarily translate to persuasion. Many celebrities seem to persuade whether they rank highly on the feeling

thermometer or not, which means that other variables drive persuasion. For example, on polemic "wedge" issues, party identification seems to have a stronger influence on attitudes than celebrity interventions. The power of party identification is well documented in the literature, so this finding is not surprising. While likability and positive feelings may not be correlated to celebrity persuasiveness, chapter 5 demonstrates that authenticity is. Thus, what is important for the participants in this study is not whether the celebrity is likable but whether s/he is authentic and whether the skills and abilities s/he provides as an entertainer or artist feed into that authenticity.

If authenticity underlies a celebrity's power of persuasion, it may also offer an additional explanation about why Bush might ally with Bono. If Bush lacked authenticity on the issue of assistance to Africa, he might benefit from being seen publicly discussing the issue with Bono. Perhaps Bono's authenticity could legitimize Bush. Through Bono, he could publicize his desire to take aid to the poorer parts of the world. He could communicate his genuine interest in real reform by taking seriously a man, supported by advocacy institutions, who not only wanted to deliver maximum benefits to the developing world but who during the Clinton administration proved himself capable of persuading some of the staunchest conservatives of the Republican Party. Moreover, by all appearances, Bono is independent and seems to have no self-interest in promoting his cause, so many believe he is credible. In this way, this alliance allows a politician to gain attention for a particular issue and potentially to recast his image by associating with a celebrity.

IS BONO "WASTING HIS BREATH"? CELEBRITIES AND AGENDA SETTING

If one were able to "connect the dots" between Lennon's efforts to draw attention to Sinclair's imprisonment and his release, we could reasonably conclude that he raised the profile of that issue so that it became part of the public agenda and produced the desired result. Even without the process tracing necessary to prove that Lennon's intervention and the release of Sinclair are more than just correlation, the timing of both events seems more than coincidental. The anecdotal evidence suggesting that Bono's efforts to raise consciousness about debt relief were successful is better documented

and more compelling. This book provides hard evidence that celebrities are adept at spotlighting public issues, and many celebrities are quite persuasive. It would certainly be an overstatement to argue that any celebrity can set the agenda any time. Nevertheless, there is enough evidence here to suggest that Bono is not "wasting his breath," so to speak. Many celebrities do well at agenda setting, and some may even be better at it than politicians are.

When celebrities attempt to attract attention or persuade, they are taking part in the sorts of strategies and tactics utilized by activist policy entrepreneurs. They deploy a set of "shakeout strategies" to disrupt the status quo or capitalize on a disruption as a means to focus important actors on their issue. Specifically, they spotlight important issues and policies, gain access to powerful players and the policymaking process, hold public officials accountable for their words, utilize leverage to push public officials to change their positions, symbolically mobilize audiences to connect or separate from politicians and policies, and convince target audiences of the validity of their positions. In that sense, celebrities are no different than other activists or policy entrepreneurs.

Moreover, like activists and other policy entrepreneurs, celebrities deploy strategies to reduce the personal risk associated with their involvement in activism. Depending upon the celebrity, many choose to connect with organizations in order to support, advance, and maintain focus on the issue. While the celebrity may lose some control over his/her vision by including more people, success and longevity of the effort depend upon coordination. In addition, celebrities can moderate their time and resource commitments if they know that an existing institution can continue their work and can call upon the celebrity to deploy their skills when necessary.

The major difference between celebrities and regular activists or other policy entrepreneurs has to do with the "power of a persona" (DeMars 2005, 9). All of the branding and publicity associated with building a celebrity image amplify their abilities to engage in "shakeout." They attract more attention to an issue and potentially enchant target audiences. Celebrities can grab headlines in unique ways, gain access to public figures that typical activists and entrepreneurs cannot, and even create compelling arguments as to why members of the public or powerful officials should agree with them. The increased resources, money, and fame, along with the "persona" described above, also mean that they may be able to reduce risk more easily than a typical activist or entrepreneur. More money equates with more power, more flexibility, more time—resources that are not in abundance for

typical volunteer citizen activists and not easily accessible to professional organizers. Because of the power of persona, celebrities are also more likely to achieve some of these goals of access and persuasion, which means that time and resources are less likely to be wasted.

Granted, not all celebrities become politically involved, so the drive to advocate on behalf of a political issue is dependent upon the desire and ability to do so. Risk cuts both ways. A celebrity does not just have to want to sacrifice his/her time and/or resources. S/he has to be willing to calculate the damage or benefit of involvement to his/her image and career. Rock and folk musicians, in particular, have had a greater degree of autonomy since the 1960s because of the way political expression was normatively linked to the artist's authenticity. Actors and athletes have had less autonomy because of the more restrictive nature of their contracts and their connections to potential commercial advertisements. It is probably not a coincidence that among those who appealed to the INS on John Lennon and Yoko Ono's behalf, most were musicians and writers. There were no athletes. Only one actor, Tony Curtis, made a statement. The rise of actor activists such as George Clooney and Angelina Jolie suggest that many Hollywood actors have more autonomy than in past years, although actors and athletes still seem to be more attached to the contracts and advertising inherent in those industries than do musicians and other artists.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Thus far, this chapter has revisited the central puzzle of this book and implications, summarized the major findings, and specified the limitations from the research. Already, several areas for additional research have been mentioned. The following sections will detail several additional areas for potential research.

Is the Fuss over Celebrity Influence New?

This chapter began by arguing that this book addresses a "modern" puzzle—why would a president care about the opinion of a rock star? It appears modern, particularly when compared to the case of Lennon and the Nixon administration. However, more research is needed to demonstrate whether

this genuinely is a modern puzzle. One way to address this concern is to replicate the time series analysis over time. In preparation for this book, data was gathered on cases of celebrity intervention from 1935 through the 1960s, including interventions by Paul Robeson, Marian Anderson, Harry Belafonte, Nat King Cole, Louis Armstrong, Jackie Robinson, and Lena Home. By utilizing the same methodology from chapter 3, one could determine whether these celebrity interventions gained much media traction at the time. One interesting variable to consider is race. All of the figures listed above are African Americans, and most of them were involved in civil rights advocacy. Would a potentially hostile media cover these artists' activism in any depth? How do their interventions compare with those by Will Rogers or Frank Sinatra? By looking at many cases over time, one could also document the rise of celebrity influence in the media. Was it a gradual phenomenon, or was there a threshold where celebrity activists had more access to the media?

Moreover, assuming that the media and political environments in 1971 really were substantially different from 2005, what conditions make a political environment receptive to celebrity activism? One potential answer comes from the transnational advocacy network and social movement literatures. Scholars have constructed frameworks to explain how activists exploit interacting international and domestic opportunity structures, which vary over time, geography, and issue area. According to table 6.1, institutions are relatively more accessible in an open structure. Likewise, strict laws or even repression can block access in a closed structure. If institutions are closed at domestic and international levels, chances of activism are diminished. If domestic and international institutions are open, activists may act according to an "insider/outsider coalition model" where activists may act primarily on the domestic level but "will keep international activism as a complementary and compensatory option" (Sikkink 2004, 165). In the case of closed domestic institutions and open international institutions, activists employ a "boomerang pattern and 'spiral model.'" A boomerang pattern describes how domestic actors, when unable to access national or local institutions, may connect with transnational coalitions to bring pressure upon those institutions. A spiral model suggests that activists pursue these efforts to create enough domestic openness to allow for activism at that level. Therefore, a successful boomerang/ spiral may result in a system that is open on both domestic and international levels. Open domestic opportunity structures and closed international opportunity

structures are often characterized by “defensive trans nationalization” activism, where activists may employ pressure on domestic institutions in order to open or democratize international institutions or to prevent transfers of power to these more opaque institutions (Sikkink 2004, 161–64).

Additional research would be needed to specify this model in the context of celebrity activism, but it is certainly plausible to assume that the U.S. government was much more “closed” at the domestic level in 1971 than it was in 2005. Donald Trump has already taken a more closed approach toward the executive branch, particularly in his treatment of the media. Relatively speaking, the government may close again. Likewise, in the early 1970s, there would be few opportunities for Lennon and his associates to connect to activists overseas to shame the U.S. government from the outside in a meaningful way. Complex internationalism and globalization have increased the ability of activist networks to connect transnationally. In 2005, Bono benefited from a friendly and open set of global leaders at a G8 conference, open domestic structures in congresses, legislatures, and among executives, and an open and technologically connected activist environment in which he could employ an insider/outsider coalition model. He could, at one point, turn to the media for attention and then work behind the scenes with leaders and policymakers to engage in agenda setting. Many trends suggest that countries are retrenching. Nationalism is rising. International institutions may be weakening. Other western governments may grow less receptive toward activists. It may be that national and global factors will affect the kind of access and influence that celebrity policy entrepreneurs have in the future.

Table 6.1 Dynamic Multilevel Governance

Domestic Opportunity Structure	International Opportunity Structure: Closed	International Opportunity Structure: Open
Closed	Diminished chances of activism	Boomerang pattern and "spiral model"
Open	Democratic deficit/defensive transnationalization	Insider/outsider coalition model

Source: Sikkink 2004, 156.

Moreover, while this book explores case studies focusing upon international celebrities and the international press, this study focuses primarily on western and even "Anglo-Saxon" cases, considering that all of the data was pulled from survey data of Americans and news sources that were mostly American, British, and Canadian. Some scholars have explored celebrity politics outside of these countries in particular and the English-speaking West in general.[6] However, further research, particularly quantitative analyses, could reveal cultural differences in celebrity politics and reveal more about how domestic and international structures enable and limit high-profile activists.

Insider Strategies

Following an aspect of Sikkink's work illustrated in table 6.1, this book separated "insider" and "outsider" strategies. Lennon deployed an outsider strategy. An insider strategy would have been extremely unlikely in 1971. Bono, on the other hand, had the flexibility to engage in both kinds of approaches.

With the exception of occasional anecdotes about celebrities such as Harry Chapin, this book focuses on outsider strategies. The methodology tested whether celebrity policy entrepreneurs could make headlines by intervening on political issues and create a contagion effect in the media surrounding the issue. It also tested whether celebrities could persuade target audiences through exposure to written content. Celebrities use their power to raise the salience of issues and to persuade outsiders (the public and the

media). The credibility findings imply that celebrities may be more influential with the public and insiders if they are credible. The intended result is to pressure insiders (policymakers) to address an issue. Research has concluded that successful media agenda setting is often correlated with policy results, and one can assume that a celebrity who is credible and persuasive with a study participant might also be credible and persuasive with a policymaker, given the chance. Some scholars have focused on specific cases of insider celebrity lobbying, but more research is necessary to illustrate this relationship, particularly as it relates to the process of influencing policymakers and policymaking.

This study concludes that perceived importance of an issue is positively correlated to a celebrity's ability to persuade. Importance is subjective. Based on Gallup polling, issues such as debt relief and AIDS prevention did not matter to the public at the time of the study. However, what is important to the public may not be the same as what may be important to a policymaker. In this study, Bono and Elton John were both credible and authentic on those issues where they are real-life advocates. However, respondents did not care about those issues. Thus, the lack of salience may have contributed to Bono and John's ineffectiveness at persuading respondents in the study. Both, however, have been insider lobbyists in Congress. Bono, in particular, is reported to be very persuasive among politicians. In short, perhaps Bono and Elton John were not persuasive with this sample of respondents at this time. However, they may be persuasive to policymakers if those policymakers believe the issue is important. Alternatively, if Bono, for example, successfully focused media attention on the issue of debt, raising its profile in the eyes of the public and policymakers, he might be more persuasive with that audience at that time. Unfortunately, the information and frames presented in the experimental study did not attempt to convince respondents that an issue was important. It just offered both sides of an issue and ended with a celebrity endorsement of one side or the other. What if an experimental group was "primed" on the importance of the issue? What if part of the frame included a justification from a celebrity about why the issue is important? Would it amplify the effect of the celebrity frame? An answer to these questions might increase an understanding of how celebrities persuade both citizens and policymakers.

Alternative Tests for Celebrity Persuasion

Celebrities were persuasive under specific conditions, as summarized above. Are there conditions that might make them more persuasive? Some research has already suggested that video appeals by celebrities are more effective than written appeals. This could be an area of further exploration. Some research has also suggested that political endorsements have a stronger effect when voters have limited information about candidates. This implies that political knowledge may be a variable in how easily celebrities can persuade. Moreover, the sample from the experimental study trended toward more educated respondents. Might the results have been different with a less educated sample? Future research might benefit from focusing on respondents who know less about issues or have less education in general. In addition, this book focuses on the difference between celebrity framing in an experimental group compared with controls and super controls with no frame or no celebrity. An alternative for future research could be to also include surveys with politicians making the same statements, hypothetically to see if Barack Obama is more persuasive than George Clooney.

Sources of Credibility

How do celebrities and politicians become credible? Maybe a celebrity or a politician needs to have a salient public position in order to have credibility. For example, Angelina Jolie was scored consistently as most credible on the issue of cancer screening. However, this was not really a public policy issue. It was more of a public service announcement: Jolie advocating for people to get genetic screening so that they could detect disease early. However, in 2013, when the first surveys were distributed, Jolie was on the cover of *Time* magazine. Does Jolie's personal experience of cancer screening and breast removal genuinely make her credible? Or is it just that she consistently appeared in conjunction with this issue? Hypothetically, if Bruce Springsteen were on the cover of *Time* talking about immigration policy, would he also be deemed credible, even though he is not an immigrant and has little experience with the issue?

Do certain public figures get credibility bumps due to circumstances beyond their expertise or control? Might Marco Rubio be deemed credible on immigration just because of his name, for example? It would be an interesting study to compare credibility between celebrities and politicians

who have Hispanic names versus those who do not, to see if respondents make different determinations based on factors that are more superficial.

Also, if politicians oppose an issue, does that make them automatically less credible? For example, are Republicans always less credible because they tend to be against same-sex marriage or skeptical about environmental protection? Might credibility change depending upon the frame of the issue itself? Would Republicans score higher if the issue were environmental regulation rather than environmental protection?

Finally, is credibility linked to familiarity? As suggested in chapter 2, Donald Trump logged hundreds of hours with television viewers before running for president. Does increased familiarity with a respondent increase a credibility score? Understanding answers to these questions will help us gain a deeper knowledge about how and why respondents believe that celebrities are credible.

Celebrity Politicians

Efforts were made in chapter 1 to delineate celebrities from politicians. However, the chapter also acknowledges that there is a lot of overlap between them as celebrities grow more political and politicians act more like celebrities. Perhaps some studies can be conducted to rank politicians on their celebrity characteristics and see if those politicians are somehow more successful. Dependent variables could include electability or effectiveness in passing legislation. One possible independent variable could be to count the number of times someone in the media said that they were like a celebrity. For example, I suspect that John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump have all been compared to celebrities, either literally in Ronald Reagan's case or pejoratively in Obama or Clinton's case. Were these presidents more electable because people saw a celebrity quality in them? Trump's celebrity victory in 2016 was a surprise. Perhaps it isn't so surprising if we think about it on a larger historical scale: Kennedy beats Nixon, Reagan beats Carter and Mondale, Clinton beats George H. W. Bush and Bob Dole, Obama beats John McCain and Mitt Romney, and Trump beats Clinton. Was their success tied to some perception of celebrity?

Which Interventions Work Best?

This book makes distinctions about predictors of the success of celebrity interventions. One predictor that was not quantitatively tested was intervention type. One of the most effective types of interventions revealed in the time series analysis was when celebrities such as Bono and Bob Geldof were invited to edit a newspaper. Clooney's arrest at the Sudanese embassy received an incredible amount of press. Is a television interview more effective than an op-ed? Should more celebrities try to get themselves arrested?

Another possible research direction could be to focus on a particular type of event. One early idea in the research design process was to focus on the effect of political concerts. Anecdotally, Lennon's John Sinclair Freedom Rally may have had some effect on media coverage and led to Sinclair's release. How well did similar events such as the Concert for Bangladesh, Live Aid, or Live 8 draw attention to their respective issue? Did that vary over time? Perhaps the Concert for Bangladesh got less coverage in 1971 than Live Aid did in 1985 because of the media's increased interest in celebrity activism. Perhaps Live 8 in 2005 had less coverage because of the increased fragmentation and choices among television stations compared with 1985. Already this book has concluded that more celebrities equal more media attention. Perhaps these massive celebrity events generate more publicity than single celebrity interventions.

A Network of Celebrity Activists

Throughout this book, much discussion has focused on celebrities' efforts to connect with advocacy networks. Additional study could further illuminate the ways that institutionalization affects persuasion, credibility, or other dependent variables. Moreover, it could also illuminate the historical normative process of celebrity attachment to advocacy organizations. Effective celebrity advocates rarely act alone. Jackie Robinson's civil rights interventions were generally organized as events and fund-raisers for the NAACP. Harry Belafonte's interventions were coordinated with advice from Martin Luther King Jr. George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh, which was to be administered by UNICEF in response to the refugee crisis there, suffered because his management failed to apply for tax-exempt status, causing most of the money to sit in an IRS escrow account for ten years (Clayson 2001; Harrison 1980). Despite its setbacks, it became the template

for subsequent benefit concerts. Harry Chapin learned from those failures when planning his benefit concerts. Ultimately, when Bob Geldof organized Live Aid, he drew upon the example of Bangladesh and consulted with Harrison himself to avoid potential mistakes (Fine 2002). He also drew organizers from Chapin's and Harrison's groups to build upon their previous experience (Coan 2001; Crosby and Bender 2000). Given the emergence of so many benefit concerts since that time, one could make the case that a semipermanent transnational network emerged for organizing successful benefit concerts. If there is evidence of an increasing permanence and professionalization of these efforts, it is an interesting alternative hypothesis to the media transformation argument advanced in chapter 2. Rather than changes in the business and technology of the media causing the elevation of celebrities into the political world, perhaps efforts by music industry professionals, concert promoters, and artists to organize played a significant role. This book does not preclude this possibility, but it also has not been the primary focus of research.

The Power of Music

At the beginning of this research project, 437 celebrity political interventions were identified over a long period, in keeping with Huddart's description of the three waves of modern celebrity activism. The first wave began in the late 1950s with the civil rights movement. The second wave responded to the antiwar movement in the late 1960s. A third wave was marked by a series of large-scale concerts, initiated by Geldof and others in response to the Ethiopian famine, borrowing from the earlier efforts of Harrison and Chapin. This wave gave rise to the branding of celebrity causes and its merger with capitalism in the form of projects such as Product RED, where consumers purchase celebrity endorsed products to raise money to assist world development (Coan 2001; Crosby and Bender 2000; Grow 2014; Harrison 1980; Huddart 2005; Lyons 2005; Marsh 1978; Richey and Ponte 2008; Shankar 2005; Swimmer 2005).

Table 6.2 Number of Celebrity Interventions by Decade Athletes

	Athletes	Actors	Musicians
1930–1939	0	0	14

1940–1949	0	0	44
1950–1959	5	0	22
1960–1969	7	3	35
1970–1979	3	6	32
1980–1989	5	5	54
1990–1999	5	11	54
2000–2009	5	63	64
Total	30	88	319

When data collection began, vast numbers of documented celebrity interventions were discovered, stretching back to the 1930s. Table 6.2 only represents the interventions discovered in the preparatory stages of this research study before narrowing case selection. This table illustrates the trend of celebrity involvement by decades.[7]

Celebrity activism has increased as the media has become more globalized and more inclined toward "infotainment." Clearly musician interventions dominate the list, and the overall numbers have grown. In the early years, the vast majority of those interventions were generated by one person, Paul Robeson, with seventy-two interventions between 1935 and 1959.[8] From 1957 to 1963, most of the interventions involved Harry Belafonte, although he frequently mobilized other musicians and actors wherever possible. The numbers on Robeson and Belafonte are likely skewed, because the data set does not include deeper research on interventions by musicians who should appear more frequently, such as Pete Seeger or Woody Guthrie.

From the mid-1960s onward, the number of musicians involved in interventions grew, and it is more difficult to argue that any one musician dominated them. These trends are consistent with the argument that the Beatles' commercial dominance from 1964 to 1970, coupled with Bob Dylan's folk ethic influence on popular music, likely created an artistic and commercial space for more musicians to express themselves politically without being normatively "punished." It also offers some support for the existence of an authenticity norm for musicians.

Table 6.2 also illustrates how athletes may be the least inclined to get politically involved, a phenomenon that seems to have reversed since 2009. In most decades, nearly all of the interventions were made by only a few athletes, whose names are well known: Jackie Robinson, Muhammad Ali,

and Billie Jean King. Over time, a wider diversity of athletes were involved in these interventions, but the total number was flat. What circumstances have changed to embolden more athletes to become activists?

Actors were scarcely involved throughout the twentieth century. Their involvement spikes at the turn of the century. By 2009, the number of actor interventions rivals musician interventions. One potential area for research would trace the reasons for this change. Thus far, the research presented in this book strongly suggests that it is likely to be associated with celebrity autonomy, particularly from commercial contracts. Television stars may be more restricted than film actors are because of the demands of commercial advertisers that sponsor programs. More research is necessary to demonstrate the potential relationship between entertainment type and potential autonomy.

Some researchers have suggested that musicians have a different sort of referent power that makes them—or at least the art of music—more capable of influence. While some political scientists have addressed this assertion (Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Mattern 1998; Street 1986, 1997; Street, Hague, and Savigny 2008), most of the literature on the multiple connections between music and power comes from other disciplines. Historians and philosophers from ancient times argued that music was attached to spiritual and political power and was assumed to be the most subversive of arts because of its potential to unify and disconnect the masses from reason (Gray 2004, 261–62; Martiniello and Lafleur 2008; Plato 1983, 26, 1985, 96–109). From medieval troubadours to modern protesters across cultures and continents, music has always been an instrument of subversion (Balliger 1999, 60–61; Benjamin 1968; Gray 2004, 151; Mattern 1998, 18, 62; Schoonmaker 2003a, 2003b; Veal 2000). From Catholic mass to military units and patriotic anthems, music has also always been a form of propaganda to psychologically control the masses (Balliger 1999; Gray 2004, 45; Said 1993; Winstock 1970). Democracies, including the United States, have sought to discourage, ban, or limit forms of musical expression deemed threatening or destabilizing (Balliger 1999, 58; Brackett 1999, 133–34; Fischlin 2003, 32; Fuchs 1999; Martin and Segrave 1993, 183).

Some have implied or argued that musicians have an authenticity edge over other celebrities because of the nature of music itself. The first way in which music is important is the way that it creates a sense of community that separates or unifies certain groups (Brackett 1999; Fischlin 2003, 11; Mattern 1998; A. Shapiro 2014; Small 1987). Individuals who feel attached

to an artist or a kind of music may even become more open to and tolerant of the experiences of others who are different than they are because they reside in the same ideational community. Moreover, attitudes within a community can change if a musician creatively and skillfully challenges his/her audience (Ballantine 1984; Mattern 1998, 22–23; Small 1987).

On the other hand, music also creates lines of demarcation between groups, separating self and other along identity lines that are created or reinforced by music and musicians. For example, the Irish are Irish in part because of their distinctive music, which forms a communicative cultural part of their identity. The virtual invention of the "teenager" in the 1950s illustrates the establishment of a youth identity that created the social space to stand counter to adult identities and therefore in opposition to dominant values (Brake 1990; Weinstein 1999, 103). Thus, Irish teenagers may perceive themselves as separate from Irish adults, and the demarcation may relate to musical artists and styles, which provide meaning and role modeling for social behavior. Some Irish rebel songs, such as "The Fields of Athenry," have different meanings depending upon their context, which make different sub-identities salient. The lyrics to "The Fields of Athenry" relate a story of suffering during the Great Famine as a man is deported to Australia. In the abstract, it is a song about Irish history. At a modern football match, fans shout it as a song of victory for scoring a goal or winning a game, uniting the nation behind the Irish team. To Irish Republicans, the song unifies them in their resentment of British oppression during the famine as Loyalist landlords exported potatoes to be sold outside of Ireland for a profit while the native Irish starved. Its informal chants of "Sinn Fein!" and "IRA!" have at times provoked offense and hostility, particularly toward Irish Loyalists.

The second way in which music generates authenticity lies in its participatory nature. While athletes play sports, audiences cheer. While actors act out a scene in a play or a film, audiences watch. In both cases, the experience is emotional, but the audience generally does not actually participate in the action. At a concert, audiences may not be able to play instruments or use microphones, but they dance, sing, clap, or sway at a concert, in a dance hall, in the privacy of their homes, or anywhere while attached to their iPhones. Because audiences play such a participatory role in the shared performance of music, the distinction between entertainer and listener is less formal. Audience members become vested in the singer and music as well as part-owner of the artistic experience, which they can repeat

at will by playing and singing along with recordings at their leisure and using the music for their own purposes (Packman 2010). The repetitiveness of music means that "Each work of music recaptures and re-creates past experience, refashioning it according to present creative and practical interests and goals" (Mattern 1998, 17).

One reason why music is participatory is due to its mental and even physical effect on the individual. Music produces messages that often cannot be expressed in words—moods, emotions, and messages that are sometimes less ambiguous than lyrics. Musicians and composers understand that when people, even from divergent cultures, hear music played in minor keys, they may feel mournful. Blues musicians bend strings to create a crying sound; Andean bamboo flute players bend notes to similar effect (Mattern 1998, 19). In addition, audiences physically feel music with their bodies as sound waves (Grossberg 1987; Mattern 1998, 17, 151; T. Rose 1994, 138; Walser 1993, 2; R. Williams 2012). Good musical performers and sound engineers know that by projecting a bass frequency at the proper level, they can create a vibration in one's chest that, combined with darkness and feelings of anonymity in dense crowds, is known to stimulate people to dance. The physical musical experience coupled with atmospheric lighting and packing hundreds of people into a small space made Rolling Stones and Doors concerts susceptible to violence and made their audiences subject to manipulation (Hopkins and Sugerman 1995; Morgen 2013).

These ideas call into question the role of fame as a key source of power for celebrities. Fame may be a necessary but not sufficient means of capturing attention. Celebrities are, by definition, famous. More research could focus on the relative effect of fame on credibility, persuasion, and the ability to capture attention in the media. This book assumes that fame is important, but does not measure it directly. However, if the relationship between music and power has more to do with the building of identity communities and the psychological and physiological effect of music on a subject, and less to do with fame, perhaps future research should not focus on famous musicians. If fame alone explains the potential referent power of musicians, why would local or regional movements utilize relatively unknown musicians in their efforts? Fame did not empower the Swansea Assembly Supporters in their efforts to record a theme song to (unsuccessfully) promote Swansea as the seat of national Welsh power (Swansea Assembly Supporters 1997). It did not empower Richard G. Jeffrey to record a CD and sell his protest music, appearing with Eurosceptic

activists on the streets of Oxford, in order to challenge greater integration with the European Union (Jeffrey 2001). It did not empower Gianluca Zanna in his efforts to sell his music, promote concerts, and lobby other musicians to mobilize minutemen in their xenophobic mission in the American southwest (Glass 2006; Zanna 2011). It did not empower teenage cellist Jason Crowe to raise awareness about ethnic cleansing in Bosnia (Jewell 2007). It did not empower Eco Elvis, a man who spreads environmentally sensitive messages by impersonating Elvis Presley and converting his popular songs into humorous environmental anthems (G. Smith 2010). These musicians had no significant fame to speak of prior to, during, or after their political involvement. Yet their unusual skills give them an undeniable identity—that of artist or entertainer.[9] What effect do musicians such as these have on their target audiences?

One of the general findings of this book is that power is more broadly distributed than many political scientists believe and that this power may be concentrated in certain kinds of public figures who are often not considered conventionally powerful or political. One of the implications of this finding is that power may come from unusual sources. Is it possible that musicians have some different effect on target audiences than celebrities in general? How does music create identity communities that unify and divide people? What qualities of music, physical or social psychological, allow powerful individuals to mobilize audiences? With few exceptions, these arguments are anecdotal and hypothetical. Already politicians seem at least loosely aware of this power of music as certain playlists are assembled to provoke feelings in the crowd prior to candidates' speeches. More empirical research could open new types of research on political persuasion and manipulation through music.

CODA

We came here not only to help John and to spotlight what's going on, but also to show and to say to all of you that apathy isn't it, and that we can do something. Okay, so flower power didn't work. So what? We start again.
—John Lennon, John Sinclair Freedom Rally, December 10, 1971

Prospects for celebrity activism improved from the time that John Lennon demonstrated for peace and agitated for the release of John Sinclair to the time that Bono lobbied some of the world's most powerful leaders to forgive the debts of some of the world's poorest countries. Ironically, the political and media environment allowed Bono and dozens of other celebrities to advantageously utilize what many believe is the worst aspect of modern news—its tendency to sensationalize and oversimplify the political world.

Changes in news and entertainment media have illustrated three sources of celebrity influence: their ability to shine a spotlight on issues of public concern, their surprising credibility, and their potential to persuade audiences. This book has illustrated how celebrities are able to engage in agenda setting, a practice assumed to be easier for politicians given their power and media access than for typical activists with fewer resources. Surprisingly, celebrities, acting as policy entrepreneurs, are potentially as capable as politicians at using the media for agenda setting purposes.

Since the study of celebrity politics is still relatively new to political science, the findings of this book open potential avenues for additional research. Further exploration of this topic might allow scholars to learn more about what kinds of domestic and international opportunity structures may facilitate or hamper celebrity activism. More can be learned about the relative success of celebrities across time and what kinds of variables affect success and failure, including whether certain types of interventions are more effective than others. This book offered some cases illustrating insider strategies, but more research can illuminate the ways in which celebrity policy entrepreneurs operate when they are lobbying public officials. Through additional framing experiments, future studies can also reveal more about celebrities' ability to persuade. A particularly fertile area of development is the potential for directly comparing differences in respondents' attitudes if they are exposed to a celebrity's endorsement of an issue versus a politician's endorsement of the same issue. One of the biggest questions underlying this book is the tension between fame and authenticity. How is it that famous celebrities can obtain an intimate and persuasive relationship with distant observers? More research into the relative authenticity of different types of celebrity and into their arts, such as music, may provide meaningful answers.

Future researchers will benefit from the conclusion that celebrities have more power than previously assumed. Even if celebrities cannot successfully spotlight or persuade in every circumstance, this possibility offers the

potential to affect the public agenda. That information alone is valuable, at least to affirm that celebrity activism is not in vain and that advocacy networks and affiliated organizations may benefit from affiliations with celebrities. While there is no doubt that many scholars will continue to be skeptical about celebrities' involvement in public life, this book demonstrates that concerned celebrities are capable of doing what was once thought extremely unlikely in Lennon's time: they can make a difference in the minds of policymakers and the public. If their efforts do not always work, at least they communicate that "apathy isn't it . . . we can do something . . . we start again."

Appendix A: Summaries of Celebrities' Political Activities in the Time Series

Angelina Jolie: Actor Angelina Jolie was a United Nations goodwill ambassador for ten years and now serves as special envoy of High Commissioner Guterres. She has been involved in building "millennium villages" in developing countries in accordance with UN development goals through the Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation (MJP) (Bella 2009, 45). In addition, she advocated for the UN across a number of issues including status of refugees and prevention of sexual violence in military zones (Hom 2012; Nichols 2013). In her role with the UN, she has lobbied the U.S. Congress on at least twenty occasions (Swibel 2006). She has also raised awareness about genetic screening for cancer since the revelation of her double mastectomy. *Time* referred to her ability to command attention on this issue as the "Angelina Effect" (Kluger and Park 2013). She is perhaps best known for supporting improved educational opportunities for African children and efforts to fight AIDS in Africa. She supports the ONE campaign, the nonprofit organization cofounded by Bono focused on forgiving debt, ending poverty, and fighting AIDS in developing countries.

George Clooney: Actor George Clooney has served as a United Nations messenger for peace since 2008 and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (R. Roberts and Argetsinger 2010). He cofounded the Not on Our Watch Project, an international organization intended to prevent mass atrocities (Karimi 2010). His political involvement has included fund-raising for a variety of disasters and filming documentaries to raise awareness about political issues. He supports gay rights and supported Barack Obama's political campaigns in 2008 and 2012 (Avlon 2012). His highest-profile work has been in turning the world's attention toward the genocide in Sudan.

Bono: Rock musician Bono has been politically involved since his earliest days as lead singer of the band U2. Their 1983 song “Sunday Bloody Sunday” advocated peace in Northern Ireland, and in 1998 they played a role in bringing together leaders from opposing sides as they worked on the Good Friday Agreement (Kootnikoff 2010, 101; Rolston 2001; White 1983). They performed on the Band Aid promotional single to benefit famine victims in Ethiopia and the subsequent benefit concert, Live Aid (Bordowitz 2003, 156). They played on Amnesty International’s Conspiracy of Hope tour and were involved in protesting the Sellafield Nuclear Plant with Greenpeace (Shirley 1992). Bono has also advocated on behalf of many global issues independently of his work with U2, most notably on debt and AIDS in the developing world.

Brad Pitt: Actor Brad Pitt’s partnership with Angelina Jolie as cofounder of the Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation (MJP), friendship with George Clooney and cofounder of Not on Our Watch, and support of the ONE campaign with Bono make him a regular activist for education in Africa, the conflict in Sudan, and AIDS. He has also been involved in fund-raising for many humanitarian causes.

Don Cheadle: Since 2010 actor Don Cheadle has served as the United Nations’ Environment Program goodwill ambassador. He is best known for raising awareness about the genocide in Rwanda through his role in the film *Hotel Rwanda.* He also is a cofounder of Not on Our Watch.

Matt Damon: Actor Matt Damon founded the H_2O Africa Foundation to raise awareness about clean water initiatives. He also supports the ONE campaign and is a cofounder of Not on Our Watch. All of these activities put him at the center of African development activism.

Muhammad Ali: Professional boxer Muhammad Ali was a controversial figure in the 1960s when he attempted to resist the draft on religious grounds and was ultimately jailed. Ali was part of the promotional team supporting Jubilee 2000 to persuade the world’s major powers and institutions to forgive the debts of the developing world. During a time when this issue received very little media attention, Ali teamed with Bono to raise awareness.

Bob Geldof. Rock musician Bob Geldof has been a longtime advocate of ending poverty in Africa, beginning with his organization of the Band Aid and Live Aid fund-raisers for the famine in Ethiopia, and continuing with the Live 8 concerts in 2005 to pressure G8 leaders meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland, to forgive the debts of developing countries. His overlap with Bono on issues regarding poverty, debt, and AIDS in Africa makes them occasional partners.

Quincy Jones: Record producer and composer Quincy Jones's philanthropic work has mostly consisted of endeavors to encourage the arts in poor communities. Bono has made appearances at these events. Jones, along with Geldof and Bono, appealed to Pope John Paul II to encourage debt forgiveness for the developing world in 1999 on behalf of Jubilee 2000.

Wyclef Jean: Rapper/R&B musician Wyclef Jean's primary political interests have been to provide aid to his native Haiti through the organization he founded, Yéle Haiti. It provided scholarships, school funding, meals, and earthquake and hurricane relief to poor Haitians. The New York Attorney General's Office alleged mismanagement and improper payments to Jean and his family, which led to the closure of the charity and subsequent lawsuits in Haiti for unpaid debts. Jean announced his candidacy for the presidency of Haiti in 2010 but was rejected on residency grounds. Jean and Bono wrote a song, "New Day," and performed together at NetAid in 1999 in an effort to raise funds and awareness for refugees in Kosovo and Africa.

Prince Harry: Although not truly a political figure or a professional celebrity, British royal Prince Harry has been the subject of frequent media attention. In 2006 he announced his support to fight AIDS in Africa through cofounding Sentebale with Prince Seeiso of the Lesotho royal family.

Alicia Keys: R&B singer-songwriter Alicia Keys is a global ambassador for Keep a Child Alive, an organization that provides medicine to poor African families suffering from HIV/AIDS. She initiated EMPOWERED, a campaign sponsored by Greater than AIDS to educate American women about HIV/AIDS. Keys was featured in an interview on *Nightline* on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the discovery of AIDS. She also performed, alongside Sudanese rapper Emmanuel Jal, in the "We Want Peace" music

video, produced with George Clooney to raise awareness about the genocide in Darfur. The video also featured appearances by the Elders, a group of international world statesmen including Jimmy Carter and Kofi Anan (Kaufman 2010).

Peter Gabriel: A longtime associate of Amnesty International, performing in all of their benefit concerts, rock musician Peter Gabriel also cofounded WITNESS, an international organization that equips and trains local organizations to uncover human rights abuses using video equipment. He authorized the use of his song "Don't Give Up" to the ONE campaign for Bono and Alicia Keys to perform in a music video, raising awareness of the impact of AIDS in Africa. He also appeared in the "We Want Peace" video, featuring Alicia Keys and produced by George Clooney (Kaufman 2010).

Elton John: Rock musician Elton John founded the Elton John AIDS Foundation in 1992, which has sponsored many fund-raisers to create an "AIDS-free future." John has repeatedly lobbied the U.S. Congress on funding for AIDS issues (Elton John AIDS Foundation n.d.; D. Matthews 2013).

Dikembe Mutombo: Basketball player and Congo native Dikembe Mutombo of the Houston Rockets led a group of current and former NBA players for basketball instruction in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2005 as part of Basketball without Borders (BWB). Supporting him were Maciej Lampe of the New Orleans Hornets, Jerome Williams of the New York Knicks, Mamadou N'diaye of the Los Angeles Clippers, Marcus Camby of the Denver Nuggets, Darvin Ham of the Detroit Pistons, and Jim Jackson of the Phoenix Suns. Approximately 350 NBA players are involved in BWB, a community outreach program to "promote the sport and encourage positive social change in the areas of education, health, and wellness" (Basketball without Borders Mission n.d.).

Usher: R&B singer Usher has been involved primarily in education campaigns but has also been involved in AIDS fund-raisers.

John Mayer: Rock musician John Mayer is most often involved in environmental causes but has also raised money for AIDS organizations.

Cynthia Nixon: Actor Cynthia Nixon, a breast cancer survivor, is an advocate for Susan G. Komen for the Cure. She also has taken part in AIDS fund-raisers.

Jessica Alba: Actor Jessica Alba has been involved in some fund-raising efforts for AIDS charities.

Appendix B: Methodology on Chapter 3 Content Analysis

The studies in this book focused on high-profile celebrities. Celebrities are, by definition, known. So it is assumed that at some level, a celebrity can garner attention. How much attention they command, what kind of attention, and whether they are able to compete with more traditional political actors for attention on political issues are all questions that remain underexplored in the literature (Hawkins 2011; Njoroge 2011; Rosamond 2011; Tait 2011; Wheeler 2011). The content analysis in chapter 3 was an attempt to answer some of these questions, and the purpose of appendix B is to offer additional detail about the methods and design utilized when gathering and analyzing data on this portion of the study.

CASE SELECTION

Since the purpose of this content analysis was to examine whether a celebrity can cut through the media noise on political issues, those celebrities selected for analysis were assumed capable of garnering attention beyond the entertainment media, at least for their professional work. In addition, choosing high-profile, "attention-getting" celebrities was important not only in terms of research design but also in terms of methodology. If celebrities made no impact outside of the entertainment press, there would be nothing to measure or the number of cases would be too small to draw any conclusions.

These criteria biased case selection toward celebrities who were well known in internationally dominant English-speaking media markets such as the United States, the UK, and Canada. It is far more likely, for example, that a popular American actor such as George Clooney would receive

coverage across international media markets than Yvonne Chaka Chaka from South Africa. While her efforts to fight AIDS are well known in many parts of Africa, most citizens of western countries would not recognize her, and western media outlets would be unlikely to acknowledge her. African media, on the other hand, would be more likely to pick up stories about American or British actors. As suggested in chapter 6, the impact of local, regional, or national celebrities is a fertile area for future research.

Celebrities were also chosen based on their long-term affiliation with political causes and connections to high-profile international institutions and transnational advocacy networks. Granted, it may have been more of an exciting "crucial" or "least likely case" to have focused on random, renegade, disconnected celebrities who happened to make an impact at a particular moment in time. However, the literature on transnational advocacy networks and policy entrepreneurship supports the notion that successful activists are more likely to be embedded in institutions and advocacy groups while renegades have little traction (Keck and Sikkink 1998). In addition, choosing celebrity activists who are densely connected with groups and causes made it possible to track protracted campaigns. Bono, for example, has been working on debt relief since at least 1998. By looking at extended efforts such as these, it was possible to draw conclusions not only about the performance of multiple celebrities across cases but also about the conditions that may limit or enable the success of a single celebrity over a single related issue. Finally, those celebrities who are deeply embedded in institutions and advocacy groups are presumed to be more credible within their own networks, at least compared with those celebrities who make occasional and unpredictable appearances.

International issues were selected as a "least likely" methodological strategy (Eckstein 1998; Gerring 2007).[1] It is safe to assume that people are more likely to care first about their own domestic concerns and that media would be responsive to those interests (Foyle 2011; Monroe 1979; Murray 2006; R. Y. Shapiro 2011). The ability of celebrities to move public attention toward international causes could prove to highlight their potential power. Moreover, both political and entertainment media have become increasingly internationalized. High-profile celebrities are known across countries and across markets. Many celebrities' projects and activities are known in several media markets. This expands the possibilities for data analysis. When a newspaper, for example, allows a celebrity to play editor

for the day, does it have an impact on the local and national market? Does the bump extend across borders? In addition, activists have become internationalized. Local activist organizations benefit from international affiliations and distant donors. In many cases, low-profile international issues would gain little attention and support from faraway citizens and politicians seeking to satisfy the narrow interests of their constituents. Does that equation change when celebrities enter the picture? Might the entrance of a celebrity move the media spotlight from parochial concerns to international ones? Many Americans may not universally care about education in Africa or feel moved to action, but without awareness, they cannot develop concern or act upon that concern.

To satisfy these criteria, this study focused on Angelina Jolie, George Clooney, and Bono. All are celebrities who have received mainstream media attention beyond the entertainment press. All have long-term relationships with international organizations and transnational advocacy networks. All have achieved a level of legitimacy within their own activist circles as well as with policymakers. All have met many times with various world leaders. And all have advocated on behalf of international issues.

For simplicity, this study limits the number of issues supported by each of the three major celebrities. The first issue included Angelina Jolie's involvement in AIDS education and treatment and education for children in Africa. The second was an analysis of George Clooney's attempts to find a resolution for the Darfur conflict. The third was a focus on Bono's debt relief efforts and attempts to prevent or end AIDS in Africa in association with the Jubilee 2000 campaign and the NGO he cofounded, Debt AIDS Trade Africa (DATA), which in turn founded and merged with the ONE campaign. In the process of researching these issues, additional celebrities appeared in the timelines. They included Brad Pitt, Don Cheadle, Matt Damon, Muhammad Ali, Bob Geldof, Wyclef Jean, Quincy Jones, Prince Harry, Alicia Keys, Peter Gabriel, Elton John, Dikembe Mutombo, Usher, John Mayer, Cynthia Nixon, and Jessica Alba.[2] While these celebrities were not the initial focus of this study, and not all match the criteria described above, their involvement provided additional data in understanding how celebrities interact with the media.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

To determine the optimal time range of study, timelines were constructed based on occasions when Jolie, Clooney, or Bono publicly intervened in the political discourse in the selected issue areas. An intervention counted as a public event initiated by the celebrity or in which a celebrity made an appearance. It could include writing an op-ed to sway public opinion in a newspaper, a public speech in which the celebrity discusses the issue, interviews with major media organizations, situations where celebrities are given editorial control over publications, meetings with public officials, involvement in protests, attendance at a fund-raiser, and the like. If celebrities wanted to make their issues known and gained some media attention in the effort, it counted as an intervention. Timelines were examined to determine whether a celebrity intervention preceded a spike in the number of stories on that issue and to examine the duration of the story. Moreover, data was gathered to determine the portion of stories on the issue that made reference to the celebrity's statements or activities.

A content analysis of two Lexis-Nexis databases provides the data. U.S. newspapers were searched utilizing Lexis-Nexis's "advanced search" feature. Searches were limited to five newspaper sources: the *New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times,* and the McClatchy-Tribune News Service. The last involves a sampling of thirty daily newspapers from medium to large city markets across the United States and includes publications such as the *Miami Herald, Kansas City Star, Charlotte Observer,* and *Sacramento Bee.* In situations where the interventions seemed to be targeted outside the United States, the same feature was used to search newspapers from the target country. In some cases, the United Kingdom was the target country, so the four publications that had the highest circulation there were selected: the *Times* of London, *Daily Telegraph, Independent,* and *Guardian.* When Canada was the target country, four of the newspapers with the highest circulation were the *Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, Gazette,* and *Vancouver Sun.*

In all cases, broadcast news sources were also searched using Lexis-Nexis's broadcast transcripts search engine. All major U.S. television news sources are included in this database as well as radio news sources such as NPR and dozens of affiliates that pick up stories from national sources and broadcast them locally. Even some entertainment sources appear in this database. Broadcast transcripts of congressional and other institutional hearings frequently appear in the database. This search engine is mostly

composed of U.S. sources, but it contains some foreign sources as well. Thus the kinds of stories that appear in search results include not only major national news coverage but also some international coverage, some coverage of U.S. government activity, and a sizable amount of local and entertainment coverage.

The advantage of using a broad database is to get a better picture of the impact of a single story across multiple markets and broadcast media. If Fox News carries a story that interests local affiliates, the story echoes across local markets, inflating its effect. No other available database could potentially capture this effect. As a result, the exaggerated effect of broadcast media is better illustrated in this search engine than simply by utilizing an advanced search limited to the major U.S. news networks. Big events seem even bigger when using this database, which reflects the reality of news consumption. Media consumers may read a newspaper or see a story online, but in broadcast media they watch it on the evening news, see it picked up again on a local broadcast, hear it on the radio, or catch it again on *Entertainment Tonight* if a celebrity is involved. The media effect is cumulative, and this search engine, while not perfect, captures that reality. Moreover, a simple search of broadcast transcripts (minus any stories that are complete duplicates from the same source or affiliate) can be quantified and replicated.

Key words were selected pertaining to the aforementioned issue areas. A search yielded a count indicating the total number of stories reported on that issue during a specified period. One search featured only the key words. A second search featured the search string, plus the name of the intervening celebrity, revealing only those stories where the media discussed the issue by referencing the relevant celebrity. For example, the first search string for Sudan was “Sudan and not earnings or quarter.” The second was “George Clooney and Sudan and not earnings or quarter.” This method produced line graphs to compare the total number of stories on an issue with the number of stories that focused on a specific celebrity in reference to that issue.

TIME SERIES ANALYSIS

The number of stories per day for each time span was recorded in a database. The celebrity intervention is the independent variable. The design

of the study was to observe a dependent variable, the number of stories occurring within a twenty-four-hour news cycle following the intervention. This was counted in four ways: the number of stories appearing in selected U.S. newspapers, the number of stories appearing in U.S. newspapers that made reference to the issue in connection with a celebrity, the number of stories appearing in broadcast transcripts, and the number of stories appearing in broadcast transcripts that made reference to the issue in connection with a celebrity. Line graphs were generated to observe (1) whether there was a visible spike that coincided with a celebrity intervention, and (2) whether noncelebrity interventions or other news stories seemed to be primarily driving coverage. Clearly celebrities are not the only drivers of news. Were the spikes in news coverage driven by political leaders making statements about the issue or by changing events on the ground? Were interventions by noncelebrities producing spikes in the number of stories? If a news organization reported on an issue with reference to a celebrity, would it create enough momentum to generate interest in other stories on this issue where the celebrity is not mentioned? The line graphs offered a way to answer these questions.

INTERVENTION REGRESSION MODELS

For analysis of the data, I estimated ordinary least squares (OLS)/multiple regression models for the dependent variable, the number of stories occurring within a twenty-four-hour news cycle following the intervention. This was counted in four ways: the number of stories appearing in selected U.S. newspapers, the number of stories appearing in U.S. newspapers that made reference to the issue in connection with a celebrity, the number of stories appearing in broadcast transcripts, and the number of stories appearing in broadcast transcripts that made reference to the issue in connection with a celebrity.

The independent variables were interventions of public figures, including celebrities, politicians, or others. Dummy variables were constructed to represent the intervention of a public figure into the news timeline. Each day received a 1 or 0 where 1 = an intervention of public figure in the time series and 0 = no intervention.[3] In all cases, a one-day lag was assumed to account for a twenty-four-hour news cycle. For example, if a political actor

intervened on May 21, a 1 would be recorded for May 21 and 22.[4] Likewise, a lag variable was introduced into the OLS model, as is often employed in time series analysis in social science research (Allison 2015; Keele and Kelly 2006).[5]

Each model represented a different dependent variable (number of newspaper stories; number of broadcast transcript stories) over a given period on a particular issue defined by the search terms. Including interventions by public figures compared the spotlighting abilities of celebrities (such as Bono, Clooney, and Jolie) with political leaders (such as Bush, Blair, and Obama) and others (such as evangelist Rick Warren, First Lady Laura Bush, or businessman and philanthropist Bill Gates). Each OLS model included an intercept statistic, which indicates how many stories were reported per day on the issue area for the designated period, if the independent variable is not taken into account, offering a reasonable measure for the salience of an issue for that period.

SELECTION OF SEARCH TERMS

When executing the time series content analysis, search terms were selected to capture as many stories as possible on the issues studied, while screening out stories that were not relevant. The following represent search strings employed to record story counts in the spreadsheet.

Debt and Poverty in Africa

January–March 1999; June 1999: debt and (poorest or poverty) and not (“pro bono” or “pro bono”) and not (earnings or quarter)

August–October 1999: debt and (poorest or poverty or poor) and not (“pro bono” or “pro bono”) and not (earnings or quarter or farm)

Africa and Debt

June–July 2007: (Africa and debt) and not (“pro-bono”)

Poverty in Africa

April–June 2002; January–March 2006: ((africa and (poverty and not (earnings or quarter))

Debt and AIDS in Africa

April–July 2006: africa and (debt or hiv) and not (earnings or Darfur or Zuma or chimp or chimpanzee or “25 years” or “bin laden” or plane or “pro-bono” or “pro bono”)

April–May 2010: africa and (debt or aids) and not (earnings or textbook or “world cup” or plane or “pro bono” or “pro-bono”)

AIDS in Africa

August–October 2003: ((AIDS and africa) and not “pro-bono”)

September–November 2005: (hiv and africa) and not “pro-bono” or “pro bono” or chastity or earnings

Education in Africa

April–May 2006: (africa and education) and not (earnings)

Sudan

September 2010–February 2011; February–April 2012: Sudan and not earnings or quarter

In some cases, additional modifiers such as “not” were used in order to cut stories that appeared in the results but did not relate to the issue. Given the volume of stories, the methodology assumes that some stories would appear in the results that were unrelated, but that the modifiers would limit these to a minimum. Manual checks of stories verified this assumption. In other cases, modifiers were unable to filter unrelated stories without eliminating relevant ones. In those cases, such as the Education in Africa and the Debt

and Poverty in Africa cases, coders looked at every story in a sequence of events and manually discounted those that did not relate to the issue. For example, when searching for “debt” and “poverty” in “Africa” in 1999, there were still many stories about U.S. domestic politics talking about poor African Americans in debt or the national debt in the United States and how it related to poverty. On one day, a story about a fire in Sudan, Texas, had to be manually filtered out. Given the limitations of the search tools, manual checks were at times necessary in order to adjust the numbers.

The different issues and search terms selected for analysis in chapter 3 represent subtle differences in the ways the issues were reported at the time. When discussing development issues, the word “development” is rarely used. Occasionally, the media focuses more on AIDS. At other times, the focus is on debt or poverty. The search terms reflected subtle changes in the language. The words “earnings” and “quarter” were eliminated from many searches because doing so eliminated stories about businesses’ quarterly earnings in Africa. “Pro Bono” and “Pro-Bono” were often used in stories about developing countries as legal alternatives for the poor. Searching for “Bono” without these limiters led to many false positives. Using “U2” as an additional limiter took out too many instances of Bono’s appearances. After a certain point in time, media sources ceased referring to Bono with the appositive “lead singer of the band U2.” In some cases, other terms were used to exclude unrelated stories. When other big stories were captured by the general search terms that did not relate to the issue studied, words were chosen to exclude stories on those topics such as “world cup,” “Zuma,” or “chimpanzee.”

NOTES ON CODING AND SPREADSHEET DESIGN IN THE TIME SERIES ANALYSIS

When recording the number of stories reported on a given day, one column represented the number of stories on that issue appearing in U.S. newspapers. Another represented the number of stories appearing in broadcast transcripts. Other columns were added if Canadian or UK newspapers were searched. The second search was reflected in a series of columns representing the presence of a celebrity in a story pertaining to that issue. Thus additional columns reflected how many stories a celebrity

appeared in as a subset of each of the previously mentioned columns (i.e., Bono's appearance in U.S. newspapers in reference to AIDS in Africa, Bono's appearance in broadcast transcripts in reference to AIDS in Africa, etc.). This data was then converted to a series of line graphs. Each graph illustrated the rise and fall in numbers of stories across time on each of the searches. When a spike appeared in the number of stories, coders read the stories for that day to determine what was driving the spike. Was it mostly one major story or a series of unrelated stories that were still within the issue area? If there were one or two major drivers, they were labeled on the line graphs. Labels were also inserted on the graphs indicating when a celebrity intervened in the timeline.

WIN-LOSS RATIO METHODOLOGY

An aggregate analysis including data from all cases provides a comparison of the relative success of politicians, celebrities, and other public figures' interventions. The dependent variable in the win-loss analysis in chapter 3 is wins and losses per each political actor's intervention opportunity. A spreadsheet was constructed listing all 123 intervention opportunities for each political actor to achieve a "win" or a "loss" over 88 intervention events.[6] Only those political actors who were involved in at least 14 interventions are displayed. This represented a natural "breaking point" in the data where the next set of political actors had fewer than 8 interventions. In addition, it eliminated some celebrities from the list who had a disproportionately high percentage of "wins," such as Alicia Keys, who only intervened 7 times.

The dependent variable was a measure of success, where all political actors were assigned a "win" or a "loss" (win = 1; loss = 0) for every intervention opportunity. What constitutes a win? If the intervention has *p*-value *of* $p \leq .05$ on an event included in the OLS analysis *and* there is a visible spike on the line chart within a one-day lag of the event, it is coded as a win. The *p*-values reported in the intervention regression models often span several events. So for an intervention event to be counted as a win, it had to be visible in the time series and statistically significant. Without those two criteria, the event was coded as a loss.

Wins and losses were separated according to media source type. Therefore, Bono may have scored a victory on an intervention event in U.S. newspaper coverage but suffered a loss in the broadcast media. The spreadsheet reflects these differences in results. This provided a comparison between the successes or failures of certain political actors across types of media outlets. There were not enough intervention events in UK and Canadian newspapers to analyze them separately. By doing this, differences between outcomes in newspaper and broadcast media can be observed.

The bivariate dependent variables were analyzed using a binary logistical regression model. Several independent variables were operationalized to illustrate the relationship between interventions and numbers of stories reported:

Presence of a celebrity: Is a win more likely with at least one celebrity present? Interventions were coded with a dummy variable (celebrity present = 1; no celebrity = 0).

Presence of a politician: Is a win more likely with at least one politician present? Interventions were coded with a dummy variable (politician present = 1; no politician = 0).

Number of celebrities: Do more celebrities in an intervention increase the likelihood of the "win"? Interventions were coded based on the number of celebrities involved with the event.

Number of politicians: Do more politicians in an intervention increase the likelihood of the "win"? Interventions were coded based on the number of politicians involved with the event.[7]

Appendix C: Time Series OLS and Logistical Regression Estimates from Chapter 3

Table C.1 Interventions of Political Actors and Stories Reported on Sudan, 2/20–4/9/2012 (OLS)

	Broadcast transcripts			U.S. newspapers		
	β	Std. error	*t* Stat	β	Std. error	*t* Stat
Intercept	6.37	2.22	2.87***	2.48	0.49	5.02****
Clooney	20.74	8.01	2.59***	5.50	1.12	4.89****
Obama	3.53	9.70	0.36	2.90	1.51	1.92*
Clooney and Obama	68.36	10.27	6.66****	3.78	1.60	2.37**
LAG1	-0.10	0.122	-0.781	0.06	0.12	0.51
Summary						
N	48			48		
R^2	0.54			0.54		
SEE	13.89			2.08		

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Table C.2 Interventions of Political Actors and Stories Reported on Education in Africa, 4/2–5/21/2006 (OLS)

	Broadcast transcripts			U.S. newspapers		
	β	Std. error	*t* Stat	β	Std. error	*t* Stat
Intercept	2.74	0.86	3.20****	1.20	0.32	3.77****
Jolie	17.53	4.38	4.00****	1.40	0.98	1.42
Pitt and Jolie	53.37	4.97	10.74****	-0.46	1.43	-0.32
Laura Bush	7.31	3.98	1.83*	0.24	1.14	0.22
LAG1	-0.16	0.081	-2.013	0.12	0.15	0.79
Summary						
N	48			48		
R^2	0.87			0.09		
SEE	5.43			1.56		

* p ≤ .10;** p ≤.05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Table C.3 Interventions of Political Actors and Stories Reported on Debt (UK Newspapers), 1/29–3/14/1999 (OLS)

	UK newspapers		
	β	Std. error	t Stat
Intercept	0.88	0.22	3.98****
Bono	1.53	0.75	2.05**
Brown	–0.33	0.90	–0.37
LAG1	–0.14	0.13	–1.10
Summary			
N	48		
R^2	0.09		
SEE	1.24		

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Table C.4 Interventions of Political Actors and Stories Reported on AIDS in Africa, 8/22-10/10/2003 (OLS)

	Broadcast transcripts		
	β	Std. error	t Stat
Intercept	1.58	0.42	3.74****
Bono	1.71	1.74	0.99
Bush	2.97	0.93	3.21***
Powell	3.82	2.20	1.73*
Congress	4.09	1.30	3.15***
Powell and Bush	1.41	1.62	0.87
Bono and Bush	0.91	1.76	0.52
LAG1	–0.10	0.15	–0.67
Summary			
N	48		
R^2	0.48		
SEE	2.10		

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Table C.5 Interventions of Political Actors and Stories Reported on AIDS in Africa, 4/14–7/12/2006 (OLS)

	Broadcast transcripts			U.S. newspapers			UK newspapers		
	β	Std. error	t Stat	β	Std. error	t Stat	β	Std. error	t Stat
Intercept	7.64	1.14	6.69****	1.02	0.21	4.81	1.62	0.34	4.72
Bono	7.00	2.06	3.40****	0.87	0.36	2.45**	1.38	0.58	2.369**
Bush	2.13	4.52	0.47	-0.74	0.76	-0.97	-0.32	1.27	-0.25
Pope	25.12	5.64	4.46****	0.15	0.92	0.17	0.34	1.55	0.22
Angelina Jolie	13.19	4.02	3.28***	-0.18	0.66	-0.28	-0.67	1.11	-0.60
Prince Harry	19.58	5.71	3.43****	-0.10	0.92	-0.11	-0.18	1.54	-0.11
Alicia Keys	58.72	6.89	8.52****	-1.18	0.91	-1.29	-0.66	1.55	-0.42
LAG1	-0.49	0.10	-4.87	0.17	0.11	1.51	0.04	0.11	0.34
Summary									
N	88			88			88		
R^2	0.53			0.18			0.09		
SEE	7.63			1.27			2.15		

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Table C.6 Interventions of Political Actors and Stories Reported on Debt and AIDS in Africa (Canadian Newspapers), 4/4–5/24/2010 (OLS)

	Broadcast transcripts			Canadian newspapers		
	β	Std. error	*t* Stat	β	Std. error	*t* Stat
Intercept	2.65	0.75	3.55****	2.22	0.39	5.67****
U.S. Congress	7.77	2.65	2.93***	1.28	1.83	0.70
Bono	–0.83	2.23	–0.37	–0.72	1.83	–0.39
Bono and Geldof	1.49	2.21	0.68	19.50	2.40	8.14****
Bono and Obama	–1.18	2.22	–0.53	5.85	1.89	3.09****
LAG1	0.34	0.14	2.48**	–2.07	0.53	–3.92****
Summary						
N	49			49		
R^2	0.44			0.63		
SEE	3.05			2.52		

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤.001.

Table C.7 Likelihood That a Celebrity versus a Politician Intervention Increases Coverage (Logit)

	Broadcast transcripts			U.S. newspapers		
	β	Std. error	Wald χ^2	β	Std. error	Wald χ^2
Celebrities	1.15***	0.43	7.01	1.05**	0.51	4.20
Politicians	0.37	0.42	0.76	0.47	0.45	1.12
Constant	–0.49	0.465	1.118	–2.00****	0.56	12.64
Summary						
N	123			123		
Cox and Snell pseudo R^2	0.06			0.04		
χ^2	7.35			4.68		

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Table C.8 Likelihood That Multiples or Combinations of Celebrities and Politicians Increase Coverage (Logit)

	Broadcast transcripts			U.S. newspapers		
	β	Std. error	Wald χ^2	β	Std. error	Wald χ^2
No. of celebrities	0.26*	0.14	3.48	0.27**	0.12	4.74
No. of politicians	0.10	0.14	0.56	0.15	0.14	1.07
Constant	0.04	0.29	0.02	−1.53	0.33	21.02
Summary						
N	123			123		
Cox and Snell pseudo R^2	0.03			0.04		
χ^2	4.10			5.06		

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Appendix D: Survey Samples

Two surveys were deployed in this study. The first was designed to discover how respondents perceive celebrities across a series of issues and how their credibility compares to a few high-profile politicians. The second survey was an experimental survey, meant to test the ability of celebrities to successfully persuade target audiences by framing issues.

Surveys were distributed over two periods. The first round was conducted in the summer of 2013, which included both credibility and persuasion surveys. The second round was conducted between October 18 and November 7, 2016. This round was intended to increase the sample size of the credibility survey, to attempt to replicate previous results, and to incorporate comparisons of respondents' perceptions of then presidential candidate Donald Trump to the celebrities and politicians analyzed in the previous round.

THE SAMPLE

The total sample population included 1,188 participants. The first round surveyed 887 respondents. Of the 887 respondents, 177 took a version of the authenticity and credibility survey, and 831 took one of the experimental surveys. The second round surveyed 301 respondents, all of whom took a version of the authenticity and credibility survey.

In the first round, all instruments were made available in self-administered paper-and-pencil surveys or identical online surveys hosted by FluidSurvey. Most of the sample came from adults attending undergraduate and graduate classes at select universities in the Greater Kansas City area. A minority were full-time students. From the university samples, 569 students took the paper version. Electronic versions of surveys were taken by 318 respondents,

most of whom were online students. Many of the online respondents also saw the survey posted on various websites and agreed to take the survey.

In the second round, all respondents took paper surveys. The majority were full-time undergraduate students, with a large number of graduate students and a few who were not students.

Table C.1 lists the characteristics of the samples. Compared with U.S. Census figures from 2015 (U.S. Census Bureau Website Services & Coordination Staff n.d.), there are a number of similarities and differences between national figures and the sample populations. Overall, the samples were younger, whiter, more educated, and more conservative than the general population, not a surprising finding given that the majority of the sample was drawn from university populations in university towns and suburban areas of the Greater Kansas City area, many of whom were business students and professionals and live in the typically “red state” of Kansas. Despite the relatively higher representation of Republicans in the survey, the percentage of Democrats and independents track consistently with national numbers. Because of the differences in the makeup of the sample populations and general populations, one cannot overgeneralize about the results nationally. However, the findings within each sample population were significant, as specified in the chapters.

Table D.1 Characteristics of the Sample

	2013 sample	% of sample	2016 sample	% of sample	Total sample	% of sample	National comparison
Age							
Median age	31	–	21	–	28	–	37
Youngest participant	18	–	18	–	18	–	–
Oldest participant	68	–	81	–	81	–	–
Gender							
Men	432	49	141	47	573	48	49
Women	455	51	160	53	615	52	51
Race							
White (non-Hispanic, non-Latino)	712	80	207	69	919	79	62
Black	83	9	27	9	110	9	13
Latino	22	2	38	13	60	5	18
Other	53	6	28	9	81	7	7
Education							
Grade school/some high school	2	**	0	**	2	**	18
High school diploma	29	3	29	10	58	5	30
Some college/no degree	299	34	150	50	449	38	27
College degree	403	45	102	34	505	43	18
Graduate degree	154	17	18	6	172	15	9
Party affiliation							
Democrat	283	32	81	27	364	31	32
Republican	291	33	98	33	389	33	27
Independent or Other	312	35	120	40	432	36	36
	N=887		*N*=301		*N*=1,188		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Statistics, 2015. Party affiliation data were from October 5–9, 2016, Gallup.

** Less than 1 percent.

The most striking difference between the sample and the U.S. population is the level of education. The sample comprised highly educated respondents, most of whom reported already receiving undergraduate or graduate degrees (58 percent combined) versus the U.S. population (27 percent combined). Likewise, the sample underrepresents those who have less education (only 2 percent have a high school diploma or less education) compared with the U.S. population (48 percent have a high school diploma or less education).

If we assume that those who are more educated may be more informed about politics and savvy about their understanding of issues, they may be more inclined to think independently than to be swayed by endorsers. Indeed, there were many unsolicited written responses on the surveys, indicating a high level of engagement with the questions. Respondents were not simply responding to a frame or ranking public figures on their credibility on a specific issue; they were thinking deeply about these issues. Whether this was due to the education level of the respondents or to a high degree of interest in the survey is not clear. Some expressed skepticism about celebrities and politicians alike. Many wrote nuanced comments that justified their answers to questions. Others wrote simplistic slogans. Some of these comments have been included in the analyses in the chapters. Overall, this high degree of engagement decreased the likelihood that respondents would be lightly manipulated by endorsements, which makes a more difficult case for celebrity persuasion.

Appendix E: Methodology on Credibility Study

To compare celebrity performance across cases, nine political issues were selected, as summarized in chapter 4. These domestic and international issues had varying levels of salience (Most Important Problem I Gallup Historical Trends 2013). Some were perceived as "wedge issues" by at least one major political party, while some issues were more consensual (Kohut 2006). The decision to include both divisive and consensual issues was intended to test celebrity credibility and persuasiveness across issues and to determine whether their performance was stronger on one kind of issue or another.

The method of celebrity selection takes into account how different celebrities may affect different respondents. Some celebrities are perceived to be quite liberal, some quite conservative, and some hard to tell. They are all generally famous, although some respondents may have been more likely to recognize George Clooney over Tim Tebow or Lady Gaga over Clint Eastwood depending upon their age, ethnicity, musical preferences, and whether they are sports fans. All of the celebrities have either been involved in advocating a political issue or candidate to varying degrees or have been highly politicized themselves. Originally Bono's credibility on debt relief and Oprah Winfrey's credibility on capital punishment were also included in this analysis, although their findings were generally not significant enough to warrant inclusion in the final analysis.

It is possible that any celebrity could lose trust with part of the audience if s/he is seen as a member of a political out-group (Brubaker 2011). Thus the survey controls for this potential bias by asking respondents about their party identification, how they feel about the celebrity, and by selecting celebrities from across the political spectrum. The authenticity and credibility survey offers some hard data about how respondents perceive them.[1] Some

celebrities were expected to be highly credible with some demographics (such as Clint Eastwood with Republicans, Tim Tebow with conservative Christians, perhaps George Clooney with Democrats, etc.). While Lady Gaga has been politically involved in issues regarding gay rights, her efforts are not commonly known, and one might expect her to be taken less seriously as a young pop artist. Someone like Bruce Springsteen, who has openly endorsed Democratic candidates, has often been interpreted favorably and his music co-opted by Republicans and Democrats alike (Grossberg 1987; Marshall 1997, 75).

AUTHENTICITY AND CREDIBILITY SURVEY

Respondents were asked three essential questions about the ten celebrities on a 5-point Likert-type scale with a range of 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely): whether the celebrity's "talents, abilities, and professional projects" make him/her an "authentic spokesperson," whether the celebrity is a "credible spokesperson" on the issue, and whether the respondent believes the celebrity supports a particular position on that issue. The first question intended to evaluate whether celebrities' influence lies within their perceived "authenticity" and if that authenticity is tied to their entertainment ability rather than their credibility (Bourdieu 1992, 130; Dyer and McDonald 1998; Jauss 2008, 153–81; Marshall 1997, 20, 52–56; Tsaliki, Frangonikolopoulos, and Huliaras 2011, 9; Weber 1968, 6, 1978, 241). The credibility question acted as a proxy to measure expert power (Atkin and Block 1983; Becker 2010; French and Raven 1959; Raven 1993). The third question provided data on whether respondents believe that a celebrity would really advocate that position (Friedman and Friedman 1979; Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1970; Lammie 2007; McCracken 1989).

Five politicians were selected for points of comparison against the celebrities: President Barack Obama, former Secretary of State and Senator Hillary Clinton, Speaker of the House John Boehner, Senator Marco Rubio, and Donald Trump. These politicians were selected first for their positions of power. Obama and Boehner were the highest-ranking political figures in their respective political parties. They all have relatively high name recognition. Clinton and Rubio were also selected because they were considered by many to be early frontrunners in the 2016 presidential election

and generated a lot of media buzz while the survey was conducted. Trump was added to the 2016 survey because he was the Republican nominee for president and a celebrity.

Since these politicians were public officials and not artists, respondents were not asked how their talents and abilities made them authentic. Respondents were also not asked about the politicians' perceived positions on political issues, since most of their opinions were fairly well known. Instead, respondents were asked the credibility question—whether the public official in question was perceived as credible when discussing the issues covered by this study. In this way, Obama's or Boehner's credibility could be compared directly with Ellen DeGeneres's or George Clooney's.

As with celebrities, respondents were also asked if they recognized the politicians. Without recognition, the results would be in question. This was actually more of a problem for the politicians than with the celebrities. John Boehner and Marco Rubio were probably only recognized by respondents who actively followed the news. Incidentally, Boehner was included in the 2016 survey, but not included in the results, because not enough respondents recognized him. Clinton and Trump, on the other hand, had nearly universal recognition in the 2016 survey. Because of their higher recognition rates, many more respondents gave them credibility ranks than they gave Boehner and Rubio. As a result, their responses were reduced by random generation to roughly match the number of respondents in each category on the credibility analysis.

Because of the long list of questions and subjects, the questions were broken into multiple surveys in order to prevent survey fatigue. Survey questions were also mixed so that respondents would evaluate different sets of subjects. Mixing the questions and the order was an attempt to prevent biased patterns of answers based on consistent, ordered comparisons.

Celebrities' mean scores were calculated across each issue. The one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether each public figure in the group was significantly distinct from each other. A Welch test was also conducted to determine if the equal variances assumption has been violated. If F was distributed asymptotically, a post hoc Games-Howell test revealed which of the public figures were significantly distinct from each other. If the equal variances assumption was not violated, a post hoc Tukey HSD test was utilized to make that determination.

In the first analysis, I ran the ANOVA across all issues across the entire 2013 and 2016 samples separately. At one point, I considered combining

them into one large dataset in order to increase the N. I did not, because I was concerned that too much time had passed and that the results could be misleading. After analyzing the data, I believe this was a good choice. For example, Clinton's strong credibility rating in 2013 and weak rating in 2016 would have canceled each other out in a combined data set. In addition, Trump was only included in the second data set, which would have complicated analysis.

Another question I faced was how to handle Trump. Trump clearly was drawing on a demographic base that included a good portion of the Republican base but also former Obama voters and others who did not seem to share orthodox conservative views. I wondered whether Trump voters were a unique category. Thus I included a question in the 2016 survey asking respondents how they planned to vote in November. That allowed me to separate Trump voters from Republicans and conservatives to see whether they would behave differently. Based on Trump's low credibility scores, even among Republicans, I wondered if his potential voters would give him higher scores. With these hypotheses in mind, I ran separate credibility rankings just for people who intended to vote for Trump, irrespective of party, to see if he ranked toward the top for these voters. I found no significant difference in credibility scores from self-identified Republicans. Then I tried running bivariate regressions of conservatives, Republicans, and Trump supporters. All were positively correlated. So despite Trump's inconsistent conservative credentials, by late October 2016 this sample of Republicans and conservatives (no matter the party ID) had largely coalesced around Trump, and there was no statistically significant difference between those who intended to vote for Trump and those who were self-identified Republicans. Thus I decided to stick with three categories of partisans: Democrats, Republicans, and independents/others.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND CREDIBILITY

Many OLS regression models were constructed to derive statistics on the relationship between demographics and respondents' credibility score of a particular celebrity or politician. Independent variables were gender, age, education, and party ID. Dependent variables were the credibility score of the figure. The 2013 and 2016 survey results were combined. Less attention

was paid to a celebrity's or politician's individual credibility on a specific issue. Most celebrities were only ranked on one issue with some exceptions, and politicians were ranked on multiple issues. After running multiple models over multiple issues, I discovered that where a celebrity or politician was ranked over multiple issues, most of the correlations were similar. For example, Republicans summarily rejected Clinton. Democrats summarily rejected Trump. If Republicans did not find George Clooney credible on Syria, they would not find him credible on genocide, either. So while there was quite a bit of variance in these figures' rankings across multiple issues, the various demographic groups tended to respond to the figures in the same way. Since dozens of models had to be generated to derive these results, it made more sense to report these findings in endnotes rather than over many tables.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND EXPERIENCE

A dummy variable was assigned to each celebrity and issue depending upon whether they had specialized knowledge on an issue or if they are perceived to be close to the issue based upon their personal experience.[2] For example, Bono's experience being educated with Jeffrey Sachs qualifies as specialized knowledge. Elton John's sexual orientation qualifies as a strong personal experience. This level of experience or expertise was only assigned to areas where the celebrity had specific expertise or experience. Thus Clooney's experiences were only applied to the "genocide in Darfur" issue, not to the "Syrian intervention" scenario. Bono was expert at debt relief but not at disaster relief. The mean credibility variable was the dependent variable, and "expertise/experience" and "institutionalization" were will be variance across cases where celebrities may be more successful in some instances than in others. What causes this variance?

To this end, an aggregate analysis of results from all cases was computed. There were 61 celebrity/question/frame combinations. The unit of analysis is the celebrity/question/frame combination and the dependent variable represents whether the celebrity successfully persuaded respondents on that particular question. For example, one of the 61 variations measures how Angelina Jolie (the celebrity) performed on the question about whether the respondent supports Syrian intervention (the question) when exposed to the

pro-Syrian argument (the frame). Another measures her performance on the same question with the anti-Syrian frame. Thus each unit is based on celebrity, question, and frame direction. Does the frame succeed on that issue in the correct direction when the frame is attributed to a celebrity?

Table E.1 Institutionalization Level of Celebrities

Celebrity	Issues	Organizations cofounded (OCF)	Organization affiliations (OA)	OCF	OA	UN	Total
Angelina Jolie	Education in Africa, AIDS, Syria, disaster relief	Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation (MJP)	Human Rights Watch (HRW), UN Millennium Project, ONE, Alliance for the Lost Boys of Sudan, Clinton Global Initiative, Millennium Promise, Yéle Haiti, Millennium Villages Project, UNHCR, UNICEF	3	10	1	14
Bono	AIDS, debt relief, disaster relief	DATA, ONE, EDUN, Product RED	WITNESS, Jubilee 2000, Amnesty International, NetAid, YouthAIDS, Millennium Promise, Clinton Global Initiative, Millennium Villages Project, Keep a Child Alive, Not on Our Watch, UN Millennium Project	12	11	0	23
Bruce Springsteen	Gun control			0	0	0	0
Clint Eastwood	Gun control			0	0	0	0
Ellen DeGeneres	Same-sex marriage		Elton John AIDS Foundation, GLSEN, It Gets Better Project, ONE, the Trevor Project	0	5	0	5
Elton John	AIDS	Elton John AIDS Foundation	AIDSLife, YouthAIDS	3	2	0	5
George Clooney	Sudan, Syria, Cuban embargo	Not on Our Watch	ONE, Make Poverty History, American Foundation for AIDS Research, Enough Project, UN World Food Programme	3	5	1	9
Lady Gaga	Same-sex marriage	Born This Way Foundation	American Foundation for AIDS Research, GLSEN, It Gets Better Project, Mac AIDS Fund, the Trevor Project	3	5	0	8
Oprah Winfrey	Capital punishment			0	0	0	0
Tim Tebow	Same-sex marriage			0	0	0	0

One additional variable was constructed based on secondary research to answer a key question raised by chapter 3: does the level of institutionalization of a celebrity positively affect his/her credibility? For each institution that the celebrity founded or cofounded (Organizations Cofounded–OCF), the celebrity was given three points. For each

organization in which the celebrity is an involved member or participant (Organization Affiliations–OA), s/he receives one point. Celebrities officially affiliated with the United Nations (UN) also receive one point.[3]

Table E.1 illustrates the results. The columns to the right are summary columns, computing the level of institutionalization according to the standards specified above. The far right column indicates a total score as of 2013, the time that the surveys were administered. By this count, Bono is highly institutionalized in this issue with a score of 23. Bruce Springsteen is not. In actuality, Springsteen is connected to institutions advocating on behalf of Vietnam veterans, Amnesty International, antinuclear energy, and revitalization of urban areas in New Jersey. None of these is related to gun control or income inequality, and as mentioned above, Springsteen has no official position on gun control outside of sympathy for victims of gun violence expressed in concert appearances. Likewise, Oprah Winfrey is connected to many charities and causes but is not involved in any anti–death penalty campaigns other than featuring activists on her show.

Appendix F: Methodology on Surveys and Means Tests

To evaluate the ability of celebrities to persuade, an experimental survey design intended to evaluate whether a celebrity advocating a particular issue could affect the attitudes of respondents in an experimental group compared with a control group.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN SURVEYS

In order to evaluate the effect of celebrity endorsements on subjects receiving the message, an experimental survey was deployed following a static-group comparison research design (Babbie 2004, 228–30; Brubaker 2011; D. T. Campbell and Stanley 1963; M. D. Cobb and Kuklinski 1997; Kuklinski and Hurley 1994; Kuklinski and Quirk 2000). In this design, a control group was exposed to general information about a political issue. An experimental group was exposed to exactly the same information, plus a frame. All groups were asked exactly the same questions about how they feel about the issue. If the experimental group responded differently from the control group, then we may conclude that the frame had an impact on the thinking of respondents. Multiple versions of the survey were constructed, each one focusing on a different issue and a different celebrity. Chapter 5 also summarizes the logic and method behind the super control variable.

To ensure that celebrities were positively identified, the participant responded to a photo and name of a celebrity accompanied by directions to rank that celebrity on a 100 degree “feeling thermometer” where ratings between 50 and 100 degrees indicated a favorable and warm feeling toward the person. Ratings between o degrees and 50 degrees indicated an

unfavorable feeling. A rating of 50 degrees means that the respondent did not feel particularly warm or cold toward the person (General Social Survey n.d.; Lammie 2007). When a respondent did not answer the feeling thermometer, s/he was presumed not to recognize the celebrity.

Different versions of the experimental survey have celebrities "flipping sides," as described in chapter 5. Some have argued that if a target audience and a speaker share the same view, but the speaker advocates for a position against expectations, thats/he can be more persuasive (Linder, Cooper, and Jones 1967; Nel, Helmreich, and Aronson 1969). Others have argued that doubt produces stronger advocacy (Gal and Rucker 2010). If a celebrity is capable of changing attitudes despite an initial difference of positions, it implies that a celebrity endorsement is quite powerful indeed. In this way, the data can reveal whether celebrities are better at advocating on one side of the issue than the other or whether a celebrity's perceived position is irrelevant to the outcome.

In chapter 4, results from the surveys of two of the issue areas were featured. The first was intervention in Syria. All surveys focusing on the Syrian intervention issue included this general information:

> Now we would like to get your reaction to the ongoing conflict in Syria. Since March 15, 2011, the country of Syria has been engaged in a civil war between forces loyal to the Syrian Ba'ath Party government led by President Bashar al-Assad and groups seeking to oust these government forces. By April, the government was using armed force against peaceful protesters, leading to condemnation by the Arab League, United States, European Union, and other countries. Since then an organized "Syrian Opposition" has emerged, engaging government forces in combat across the country. By February 2013, the estimated death toll was 70,000. The Obama administration has indicated that if government forces use chemical weapons on their own people, the U.S. will be compelled to intervene. Recently, the administration announced that there was some evidence that chemical weapons have been used, but that the evidence is not compelling enough yet to intervene in Syria and that they want support from allies before planning any military action. Many Republican lawmakers have attacked the president's position, arguing that they should

> already have bombed Syrian air bases, armed the rebels, and readied an international force to secure chemical weapons stocks.

The control surveys received no additional information. The super control and experimental groups receiving a pro-Syrian intervention survey read this frame at the bottom of the general information paragraph:

> We already know the Assad regime has chemical weapons and has committed atrocities and human rights abuses against its own people. In addition, an organized opposition is ready to take over the reins of government if Assad is pressured out of power. Therefore, I believe the U.S. should increase the pressure on the regime by militarily intervening in Syria before more people die.

In pro-Syrian intervention super control groups, this quote was attributed to "a noted celebrity." In one of the experimental groups, it was attributed to George Clooney. In another experimental group, it was attributed to Angelina Jolie.

An anti-Syrian intervention quote was also constructed and included in additional super control and experimental groups. This quote appeared at the bottom of the general information paragraph in those surveys:

> While I am concerned about the people of Syria, I am more concerned about making the same mistake we made when invading Iraq: getting involved before we had the evidence, the proper strategy, and international support. Without all of that, we're sure to alienate our allies and ultimately fail, potentially risking American lives. Therefore, I am in favor of staying out of it. We don't need to get involved in another war.

Again, this quote was attributed to "a noted celebrity" in the super control groups, and to George Clooney and Angelina Jolie in two separate experimental groups.

In all Syrian intervention surveys, respondents were asked these questions on a 5-point Likert-type scale with a range of 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely).[1]

- What is the likelihood that you would support a U.S. military intervention in Syria?
- What is the likelihood that you would support a U.S. military intervention without consultation or support from allies?
- What is the likelihood that you would support a U.S. military intervention to stop or prevent human rights abuses?
- What is the likelihood that you would vote for a public official who supports military intervention in Syria?

The second issue of focus in chapter 4 was on same-sex marriage. All surveys on this issue included the following general information:

> Now we would like to get your feelings about same-sex marriage. Several jurisdictions in the United States recognize same-sex marriage. Nine states prohibit it by law and thirty prohibit it by constitutional mandate. The Defense of Marriage Act prevents the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages, although the constitutionality of the act is under court review. Gay rights advocates argue that without the right to marry, they are stigmatized and treated differently than heterosexual couples and are denied legal access to certain benefits that are unique to married couples. For example, legally married couples get special tax breaks, preferential insurance rates, and are allowed to be involved in end of life issues with their spouses.
>
> Same-sex couples receive none of these benefits. They also argue that this would encourage monogamy and strong family values between gay couples, and if they are allowed to adopt, more children may find loving homes. On the other hand, opponents of same-sex marriage argue that marriage is an ancient religious institution that has always been defined as being between a man and a woman. To legitimize same-sex marriage would weaken respect for this institution, confuse gender roles, and weaken the traditional family values some say are essential to society. They argue that the homosexual lifestyle is sinful and leads to immorality, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, psychological disorders, and other problems. The legalization of

same-sex marriage could also lead to other unacceptable forms of marriage such as polygamy.

As with the Syrian intervention case, control groups were only exposed to this information. Super control and experimental groups reading the pro-same-sex marriage surveys read this frame at the bottom of the previous paragraph:

> God loves everyone. I think it's time to stop looking at homosexuals as freaks. It doesn't hurt me or anybody else if gay people get married. And no law forces individual churches to marry gay people, so really it still would be up to each congregation whether or not they want to do it. We need to legalize same-sex marriage to end discrimination and give gay couples the same rights as everybody else. I encourage others to financially support organizations and candidates who will protect these rights.

The anti-same-sex marriage surveys included this quote instead:

> Heterosexual marriage is the foundation of child rearing and family values in society. We can talk about ways to protect the rights of homosexuals as individuals. But I don't think we should just arbitrarily allow gay marriage. We cannot allow the federal government to water down the sacred institution of marriage that God has defined as between a man and a woman. I encourage others to financially support organizations and candidates who will protect the sanctity of marriage.

As noted above, these quotes were attributed to "a noted celebrity" in the super control groups. In separate experimental groups, these quotes were attributed to Lady Gaga and Tim Tebow. Another experimental group was exposed to a version of the pro-same-sex marriage frame attributed to Ellen DeGeneres.[2]

The following questions were asked of all respondents reading same-sex marriage surveys:

- What is the likelihood that you would support legalization of same-sex marriage?

- What is the likelihood that you would give money to organizations or vote for candidates that support same-sex marriage?
- What is the likelihood that you would give money to organizations or vote for candidates that oppose same-sex marriage?

MEANS COMPARISONS AND ORDERED LOGISTICAL REGRESSION MODELS

In order to graphically illustrate the differences in outcomes between control and experimental groups, tables were constructed illustrating the means differences. Ordered logistical regression models were employed to discover whether the means in the experimental groups differed significantly from the control groups. The dependent variable was represented by respondents' answers to the survey questions on the Likert scale, for example, how respondents in the Syria issue answered the question, "What is the likelihood that you would support U.S. military intervention in Syria?" A number of independent variables were input, most notably dummy variables indicating the presence or absence of a celebrity frame. If, for example, respondents were treated to George Clooney advocating in favor of Syrian intervention, it was coded as a 1. If they did not, it was coded as a o. Super control variables were also included in the model to discover if the frame itself, without a celebrity name attached, was sufficient to affect attitudes. The control group on each issue served as a baseline for analysis. Additional variables such as age, gender, and party affiliation were included to take into account competing hypotheses from the literature review. Finally, the feeling thermometer measure was included to determine whether a respondent's feelings about the celebrity would affect his/her inclination to agree with the celebrity.

AGGREGATE ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

If celebrities are at all capable of persuasion in individual cases, such as the Syrian intervention and same-sex marriage case, further analysis is necessary to determine what variables affect a celebrity's ability to be persuasive. Presumably there Table F.1 Computation of Importance Scores:

Percentage of Respondents Mentioning the Issue as “Important” in Gallup Polls will be variance across cases where celebrities may be more successful in some instances than in others. What causes this variance?

Table F.1 Computation of Importance Scores: Percentage of Respondents Mentioning the Issue as “Important” in Gallup Polls

Issue	Associated problems in Gallup Poll	Importance score
AIDS	Not listed	0
Cuban embargo	International issues, problems	1
Death penalty	Crime, violence	2
Debt relief	Foreign aid/focus overseas	3
Federal disaster relief	Not listed	0
Gun control	Guns/gun control/school shootings/crime, violence	3.5
Same-sex marriage	Gay rights issues/ethics, moral, religious decline	6.5
Syria	War/conflict with Middle East nations/war(nonspecific)/ foreign aid/focus overseas	5

To this end, an aggregate analysis of results from all cases was computed. There were 61 celebrity/question/frame combinations. The unit of analysis is the celebrity/question/frame combination and the dependent variable represents whether the celebrity successfully persuaded respondents on that particular question. For example, one of the 61 variations measures how Angelina Jolie (the celebrity) performed on the question about whether the respondent supports Syrian intervention (the question) when exposed to the pro-Syrian argument (the frame). Another measures her performance on the same question with the anti-Syrian frame. Thus each unit is based on celebrity, question, and frame direction. Does the frame succeed on that issue in the correct direction when the frame is attributed to a celebrity?

As in chapter 3, the ability to persuade or not can be operationalized as a dummy variable into “wins” (1) and “losses” (o). A celebrity/question/frame combination is operationalized as a “win” if (A) the celebrity moved attitudes in a direction consistent with the celebrity

frame and (B) the mean is different from the control and super control ($p \leq .10$). If not, it is coded as a loss.

One variable included in the analysis was "issue importance." This variable was derived from answers to a Gallup poll question in the summer of 2013 when the surveys were deployed: "What do you think is the most important problem facing the country today?" The importance score was computed by adding the percentage of Americans concerned about these problems.[3] Importance scores are listed in table F.1. Of the issues listed below, the summer of 2013 was a time when media coverage focused significantly on same-sex marriage and the associated Supreme Court case and the escalating conflict in Syria. It anecdotally makes sense that they would be toward the top of this list.

A second variable was a measure of polarization. While wedge issues are divisive, they may not be equally important to both major political parties. For example, opposition to gay marriage is likely to mobilize Republicans to vote. While Democrats generally support gay marriage, they are not nearly as threatened by the issue as Republicans are, so the issue is less likely to provoke them to action (Kohut 2006). A simple scale of wedge polarity was constructed using the results from a logistical analysis of the experimental data. If party ID was statistically significant in the logistical analyses, and the result was correlated in the direction consistent with party expectations, one could conclude that party ID played a strong role in respondents' attitudes toward that issue. If party identification had no effect on the results (implying no polarization), it was coded with a 1. If party ID was statistically significant for Democrats or Republicans (implying a wedge issue for one party or the other), it was coded with a 2. If party ID was statistically significant for both parties and the parties are on opposite sides of the issue (implying a high level of polarization), it was coded with a 3. Independents were the baseline.

This survey also collected data about whether celebrities were perceived to support a particular direction on an issue or not. These three variables provide key data about the qualities of specific celebrities: Are they perceived as authentic based on their art, talent, or ability to entertain? Do they have credibility in a particular issue area? Do respondents believe that celebrities are articulating their true beliefs when they present a frame? As summarized in chapter 5, these questions were answered by including this variable in the regression analysis.

Appendix G: Experimental Logit Estimates from Chapter 5

Table G.1 Likelihood That Respondent Will Support Intervention in Syria

Ordered logit estimates			
Pro-Syria intervention treatment		Anti-Syria intervention treatment	
	Estimate		Estimate
Jolie pro-intervention frame	0.416	Jolie anti-intervention frame	1.206****
	(0.374)		(0.377)
Clooney pro-intervention frame	1.073***	Clooney anti-intervention frame	0.746***
	(0.386)		(0.361)
Supercontrol pro-intervention frame	0.403	Supercontrol anti-intervention frame	0.094
	(0.36)		(0.388)
Age	–0.014	Age	–0.02***
	(0.01)		(0.01)
Gender	–0.294	Gender	–0.286
	(0.26)		(0.256)
Republican	0.276	Republican	0.374
	(0.305)		(0.304)
Democrat	0.025	Democrat	0.125
	(0.313)		(0.315)

Feeling about celebrity	0.001	Feeling about celebrity	0.004
	(0.005)		(0.005)
Ancillary parameters		Ancillary parameters	
_cut1	–2.107****	_cut1	–2.703****
	(0.555)		(0.533)
_cut2	–0.787	_cut2	–1.348***
	(0.534)		(0.505)
_cut3	0.907*	_cut3	0.378
	(0.536)		(0.496)
_cut4	2.844**** _cut4	2.313****	
	(0.599)		(0.559)
Summary		Summary	
Cox and Snell pseudo R^2	0.057	Cox and Snell pseudo R^2	0.081
χ^2	12.745	χ^2	18.302
N	216	N	216

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Standard error is in parentheses.

For the dependent variable, respondents were asked, “What is the likelihood that you would support U.S. military intervention in Syria?”

Table G.2 Likelihood That Respondent Will Support Public Officials Who Advocate Intervention

Ordered logit estimates			
Pro-Syria intervention treatment		Anti-Syria intervention treatment	
	Estimate		Estimate
Jolie pro-intervention frame	0.264	Jolie anti-intervention frame	–0.728*
	(0.392)		(0.388

Clooney pro-intervention frame	0.599	Clooney anti-intervention frame	–0.638*
	(0.399)		(0.377)
Super control pro-intervention frame	–0.007	Super control anti-intervention frame	0.41
	(0.382)		(0.409)
Age	–0.01	Age	–0.011
	(0.011)		(0.01)
Gender	–0.39	Gender	–0.371
	(0.273)		(0.27
Republican	0.611*	Republican	0.699**
	(0.323)		(0.323)
Democrat	0.173	Democrat	0.3
	(0.331)		(0.333)
Feeling about celebrity	–0.006	Feeling about celebrity	–0.004
	(0.005)		(0.005)
Ancillary parameters		Ancillary parameters	
_cut1	–2.592****	_cut1	–2.745****
	(0.592)		(0.56)
_cut2	–1.463*	_cut2	–1.606***
	(0.568)		(0.533)
_cut3	1.043	_cut3	0.96**
	(0.564)		(0.524)
_cut4	2.649****	_cut4	2.587****
	(0.624)		(0.589)
Summary		Summary	
Cox and Snell pseudo R^2	0.051	Cox and Snell pseudo R^2	0.074
X^2	11.109	X^2	16.384
N	214	N	214

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Standard error is in parentheses.

For the dependent variable, respondents were asked, “What is the likelihood that you would vote for a public official who supports military intervention in Syria?”

Table G.3 Likelihood That Respondent Will Support Same-Sex Marriage

Ordered logit estimates			
Pro-same-sex marriage treatment		Anti-same-sex marriage treatment	
	Estimate		Estimate
Gaga pro-intervention frame	0.197	Gaga anti-intervention frame	–0.532
	(0.346)		(0.376)
Tebow pro-intervention frame	0.022	Tebow anti-intervention frame	–0.932**
	(0.38)		(0.373
DeGeneres pro-intervention frame	0.953**	DeGeneres anti-intervention frame	—
	(0.409)		—
Supercontrol pro-intervention frame	0.102	Supercontrol anti-intervention frame	0.115
	(0.367)		(0.4)
Age	–0.022**	Age	–0.028**
	(0.011)		(0.011
Gender	0.081	Gender	–0.022
	(0.241)		(0.244
Republican	–1.159***’	f Republican	–1 272****
	(0.288)		(0.284
Democrat	–0.025	Democrat	–0.104
	(0.295)		(0.288
Feeling about celebrity	0.013***	Feeling about celebrity	0.014***

	(0.005)		(0.005)
Ancillary parameters		Ancillary parameters	
_cut1	–1.713***	_cut1	–2.261****
	(0.508)		(0.525)
_cut2	–1.209**	_cut2	–1.754****
	(0.501)		(0.517)
_cut3	–0.331	_cut3	–0.865*
	(0.495)		(0.507)
_cut4	0.416	_cut4	–0.112
	(0.496)		(0.505
Summary		Summary	
Cox and Snell pseudo R^2	0.172	Cox and Snell pseudo R^2	0.178
X^2	47.799	X^2	49.817
N	254	N	254

* p ≤ .10; ** p ≤ .05; *** p ≤ .01; **** p ≤ .001.

Standard error is in parentheses.

For the dependent variable, respondents were asked, “What is the likelihood that you would support legalization of same-sex marriage?”

Table G.4 Correlates of “Wins” in Celebrity Persuasion (p ≤ .10)

Binary logistical regression estimates			
	β	Std. error	Waldχ^2
Perceived importance of issue	1.51	0.57	6.91****
Issue polarity	–2.59	1.20	4.66***
Perceived authenticity of celebrity	0.05	0.02	5.867**
Celebrity advocates consistently with respondent’s expectations	–2.45	1.58	2.42
Constant	–6.01	2.82	4.547**
Summary			

N	61
Cox and Snell pseudo *R2*	0.36
χ2	26.75

NOTES

CHAPTER 1. THE PRESIDENT MEETS THE ROCK STAR

1. *Bob Roberts* is a 1992 political mockumentary in which a popular singer uses his abilities as a celebrity to win election to a Senate seat in Pennsylvania. *Bullworth* is a 1998 political drama in which a senator running for reelection gains more popularity for every honest and offensive remark he makes.

2. Television networks and tabloids have made stars of ordinary people through reality television. However, by the time media organizations introduce so-called ordinary people into the public sphere, their lives have been edited to include only the most salacious details, making them as publicly constructed as any celebrity or politician.

3. For a sampling of this growing literature, see Corner and Pels 2003; Couldry and Markham 2007; Dyer and McDonald 1998; Giroux 2002; Gitlin 1998; Lammie 2007; Louw 2010; Marshall 1997; Rojek 2010; Rosamond 2011; Street 1986, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2004; Street, Hague, and Savigny 2008; Tsaliki, Frangonikolopoulos, and Huliaras 2011; G. Turner 2004; West and Orman 2003; Wheeler 2008, 2011, 2013; Zoonen 2004.

4. Some scholars are cynical about celebrities' motives for involvement. Some celebrities may appear beneficent as they opportunistically use issue advocacy as a way to burnish their public image (Tsaliki, Frangonikolopoulos, and Huliaras 2011), and it does not hurt to be on the *Forbes* Top 100 Most Powerful Celebrities list (Becker 2010, 95). On the other hand, in one study, celebrities who make candidate endorsements are liked less after the endorsement than before, which is somewhat consistent with Symmonds's perceived personal experience (Lammie 2007).

5. The spotlight analogy is further developed in chapter 2 and sourced in Crosby and Bender (2000, 14) and Richardson (2002).

CHAPTER 2. ULTIMATE CELEBRITY MAKEOVER: HOW DO CELEBRITIES INFLUENCE OTHERS?

1. Recent discussions on this topic can be found in Corner and Pels 2003, 3–4; Bennett 2012; W. J. Campbell 2003; Kuypers 2013. Kuypers argues that the modern media has returned to its partisan roots after a brief historical period where “objectivity” was attempted.

2. See Adorno 2002; Balliger 1999, 58; Boorstin 1992; Fenster and Swiss 1999, 225; Gramsci 2011; Marshall 1997, 25–26; Martiniello and Lafleur 2008.

3. Scholars have increasingly discussed the role of perceived authenticity for musicians in particular. See Ballantine 1984; Balliger 1999, 60–63; Brackett 1999; Fischlin 2003, 11; Grossberg 1987; Kruse 1999, 87–89; Marshall 1997, 150, 75; Mattern 1998, 16–17; T. Rose 1994, 18; Schoonmaker 2003b, 2003a; Small 1987; Veal 2000; Winstock 1970, 70–71.

4. Hall president Dale Petroskey said that Tim Robbins’s public criticism undermined the country and “ultimately could put our troops in even more danger.” Subsequently, an interview with Robbins by Matt Lauer on the *Today Show* was cut short when Robbins stepped up his criticism.

5. For a discussion of these tactics, see Antrobus and Sen 2006, 149; Appaduri 2006, xi; Clark 2006; Grove and Carter 1999; Keck and Sikkink 1998, 16, 24–29, 202; Mekata 2006, 186; Nelson 2004; Overdevest 2005; Riker 1996; Tarrow 1996.

6. This finding has interesting implications for political research if the analogy holds between products and political candidates or causes. In order to be effective, the celebrity would have to make the target audience feel more attractive or better about themselves in order to be effective.

7. The transnational advocacy network literature treats symbolic politics as a separate category of activity from information politics. Because French and Raven’s typology groups together forms of information distribution and persuasion, it makes sense to place symbolic politics in this category. Despite its treatment of symbolic politics as a separate category, the transnational advocacy network literature has done little to specify or test its impact or acknowledge its potential power.

8. Much of the research on policy entrepreneurs focuses on key legislators’ abilities to make an issue prominent that would not otherwise

rise on the public agenda (Loomis and Nownes 1993). John Kingdon (2010, 122) in his early use of the term argues that policy entrepreneurs "could be in or out of government, in elected or appointed positions, in interest groups or research organizations. But their defining characteristic, much as in the case of a business entrepreneur is their willingness to invest their resources —time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money—in the hope of a future return."

9. For a more comprehensive discussion on policy streams and exploiting windows of opportunity, see Crowley 2003, 14–27; Henig 2009; Knott and McCarthy 2007; Levin and Sanger 1994; Mintrom 1997, 2000; Mintrom and Norman 2009, 652; Mintrom and Vergari 1996; Quinn 2000; N. C. Roberts and King 1991; Schattschneider 1975; Stone 2001; Teske 2004.

10. The insider-outsider strategy has been conceptualized and developed by Florini, Nihon Kokusai Ko ryu Senta , and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace 2000, 105; Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 2002, 67; Naidoo 2006, 56–57; della Porta and Tarrow 2004; Price 1998; M. Rodrigues 2004; Torrance and Torrance 2006.

CHAPTER 3. THE POWER OF SPOTLIGHTING: CELEBRITIES AND ISSUE ADVOCACY IN THE MEDIA

1. These celebrities' political activities are summarized in appendix A.

2. According to OLS regression estimates in table C.1 in appendix C, the broadcast media reported 6 stories on Sudan (intercept $\beta = 6.37$). Clooney and Obama appearing together resulted in 68 stories ($\beta = 68.36$, $p \leq .001$). Clooney alone generated 21 stories during the period ($\beta = 20.74$, $p \leq .05$) while Obama generated little attention without celebrities ($\beta = 3.53$, n.s.).

3. Clooney produced six more stories in newspapers ($\beta = 5.50$, $p \leq .001$), when newspapers produced about two stories per day (intercept $\beta = 2.48$). Clooney's meeting with Obama also attracted attention ($\beta = 3.78$, $p \leq .05$). Obama performed better in newspapers than in broadcast media ($\beta = 2.90$, $p \leq .10$). See table C.1 in appendix C.

4. According to OLS regression estimates in table C.2 in appendix C, Jolie produced 18 additional stories ($\beta = 17.53$, $p \leq .001$) compared to the intercept ($\beta = 2.74$). Pitt and Jolie produced 53 additional stories ($\beta = 53.37$, $p \leq .001$). Laura Bush also increased coverage ($\beta = 7.31$, $p \leq .10$). Pitt and

Jolie (β = –0.32, n.s.) and Jolie acting alone did not produce a significant outcome (β = 1.42, n.s.).

5. Bono's interventions led to two more stories per day than when he did not intervene (β = 1.75, $p \leq .01$).

6. Bono and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill's tour produced significant spikes in media coverage in U.S. newspapers, but not in broadcast media (β = 1.136, $p \leq .005$).

7. Bush (β = 2.97, $p \leq .01$) and Congress (β = 3.15, $p \leq .01$) produced spikes in coverage in broadcast news, and Colin Powell was also likely to generate attention. Bono's interventions do not register (β = 1.71, n.s.), even when appearing with President Bush (β = 0.91, n.s.). See table C.4 in appendix C.

8. Interventions significantly increased the coverage of AIDS in Africa, with Alicia Keys (β = 58.72, $p \leq .001$) and Prince Harry (β = 19.58, $p \leq .001$) producing the strongest celebrity effects. Pope Benedict also produced a significant and unsurprising bump in coverage (β = 25.12, $p \leq .001$). See table C.5 in appendix C.

9. Bono and Geldof's editorship yielded 19.5 stories (β = 19.50, $p \leq .001$) compared with the 2.22 stories generated on any other day in this newspaper. The direct intervention of a celebrity by controlling a form of media de facto increased the coverage of that issue among Canadian newspapers. The Bono and Obama meeting also received attention and generated roughly six stories on the day of that event (β = 5.85, $p \leq .001$). See table C.6 in appendix C.

10. Only those political actors who were involved in at least fourteen total interventions are displayed. Wins and losses were for broadcast transcripts and U.S. newspapers. Content analyses of UK and Canadian newspapers did not produce enough intervention opportunities to be statistically significant, so those results do not appear in table 3.8. The bottom section represents "total wins across all cases," which includes broadcast transcripts and U.S. newspapers as well as UK and Canadian newspapers on those cases where additional data was used in those markets. See appendix B for a full detailed methodology.

11. In both broadcast media coverage (β = 1.15, $p \leq .01$) and newspapers (β = 1.05, $p \leq .05$), a celebrity intervention on a political issue increases the likelihood of media coverage. Politicians' interventions are not statistically

significant in broadcast media (β = 0.37, n.s.) or in U.S. newspapers (β = 0.47, n.s). See table C.7 in appendix C.

12. The more celebrities involved in an intervention, the more likely they are to create a spike in coverage in both broadcast media (β = 0.26, $p \leq .10$) and in U.S. newspaper coverage (β = 0.27, $p \leq .05$). More politicians do not inspire more coverage. See table C.8 in appendix C.

13. The notion that a politician may be "overexposed" and therefore less potent is consistent with the celebrity product endorsement literature (Roy 2012).

CHAPTER 4. BLITHERING IDIOTS AND TOTAL LOSERS: ARE CELEBRITIES CREDIBLE?

1. With few exceptions, the study of politics and popular culture was a marginalized and underdeveloped area of study among American politics scholars until the 1990s. Shea's 1998 edited volume on the subject lamented the lack of scholarship and the lack of seriousness given to the study of popular culture, but says little about celebrity. The literature has a few modern precursors to Shea's edited volume on politics and popular culture (Dyer and McDonald 1998; Gamson 1994; Marshall 1997; Meyer and Gamson 1995; Street 1986, 1997), and a body of research has been slowly growing since then. Still, the collection of articles and books on the subject could hardly be considered a subfield, and the answers to research questions often offer ambiguous answers.

2. Incidentally, Marley had credibility problems of a different kind because he had a publicized extramarital affair and a child with Cindy Breakspeare, Miss World of 1976 (Moskowitz 2007b, 71).

3. How rational voters (or citizens) are has been a long-standing debate in the political science literature with early works such as *The American Voter* (A. Campbell et al. 1980) establishing that people are more inclined to vote based on psychological and identity factors such as party identification, versus V. O. Key in *The Responsible Electorate* arguing that voters make rational decisions about candidates and issues. In reality, both positions likely have validity, although reconciling the two positions is far from simple. Sabato's comments reflect Key's relative optimism about voters or at least presume that voters have a rational interest in not voting for

celebrities who lack credibility and experience to advance policies that will benefit them.

4. For additional notes documenting the methodology of this study, refer to appendices D and E.

5. The one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether each public figure in the group was significantly distinct from each other, statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level. A Welch test was also conducted to determine if the equal variances assumption has been violated. If F was distributed asymptotically, a post hoc Games-Howell test revealed which of the public figures were significantly distinct from each other. If the equal variances assumption was not violated, a post hoc Tukey HSD test was utilized to make that determination.

6. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 income inequality issue ($F(4,205) = 4.23$, $p = 0.003$). Results of the Games-Howell test revealed that Clinton's mean was significantly higher than Boehner's and Springsteen's ($p \leq 0.05$). In the 2016 sample, a one-way ANOVA also determined a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,336) = 13.73$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell test revealed that Obama's mean was significantly higher than Trump's and Springsteen's, and the rest were higher than Trump's ($p \leq 0.05$).

7. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 gun control issue ($F(5,274) = 3.10$, $p = 0.01$). Results of the Games-Howell test revealed that Obama's and Boehner's means were significantly higher than Springsteen's ($p \leq 0.05$). On the 2016 gun control case, a one-way ANOVA could not determine a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(5,412) = 1.92$, $p = 0.091$).

8. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 genocide issue ($F(4,223) = 7.86$, $p = 0.000$). In the aggregate, George Clooney's means were statistically significantly lower than Clinton's ($p = 0.002$), according to a Games-Howell test, but were indistinguishable from the others. A one-way ANOVA also determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2016 genocide issue ($F(4,340) = 9.15$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell tests reinforce these findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

9. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the environment issue in the 2013 sample ($F(4,206) =$

5.83, p = 0.000). In the 2016 sample, a one-way ANOVA also determined a statistically significant difference between groups (F(4,322) =23.91, p = 0.000). Results of the Games-Howell test reinforce these findings ($p \leq$ 0.05).

10. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 AIDS issue (F(5,264) = 10.28, p = 0.000). There was not a statistically significant difference in the credibility means between Elton John ($\bar{x}$= 3.77, SD = 1.14), Ellen DeGeneres $\bar{x}$= 3.46, SD = 0.93), or Clinton ($\bar{x}$= 3.21, SD = 0.95). However, there was a statistically significant difference between John and Obama ($\bar{x}$= 2.96, SD = 1.07, p = 0.001) and between DeGeneres and Boehner ($\bar{x}$= 2.60, SD = 0.73, p = 0.001). On the 2016 sample, a one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups (F(5,443) = 9.15, p = 0.000). Results of the Games-Howell test reinforce these findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

11. In the 2013 sample on the same-sex marriage case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups (F(7,339) = 13.11, p = 0.000). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups (F(7,552) = 34.99, p = 0.000). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

12. In the 2013 sample on the genetic testing issue, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups (F(4,210) = 8.92, p = 0.000). According to a Games-Howell test there was a clear and statistically significant difference in the credibility means between Angelina Jolie ($\bar{x}$= 3.55, SD = 1.13) and all political actors (p = 0.000 for all groups) except for Hillary Clinton ($\bar{x}$= 3.07, SD = 0.96). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups (F(4,336) = 20.16, p = 0.000). Results of the Games-Howell reinforced the 2016 findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

13. The one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups in the marijuana legalization issue in the 2013 sample (F(4,216) = 4.33, p = 0.002). A Games-Howell test revealed that there was a clear and statistically significant difference in the credibility means between Nelson ($\bar{x}$= 3.26, SD = 1.31) and Boehner ($\bar{x}$= 2.58, SD = 0.88, p = 0.049), suggesting that he performed better than both Republican politicians on this issue. His means is not statistically significantly different from Clinton's ($\bar{x}$ = 3.05, SD = 1.08) or Obama's ($\bar{x}$= 2.94, SD = 1.12). In the 2016 sample,

the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,353) = 33.76$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2016 findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

14. In the 2013 sample on the Syrian case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(5,270) = 3.37$, $p = 0.006$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(5,406) = 8.56$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

15. For additional details on the samples, see appendix C.

16. In the 2013 independent sample on the income inequality case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,64) = 3.09$, $p = 0.022$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,136) = 6.87$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

17. In the 2013 independent sample on the genocide case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,72) = 3.03$, $p = 0.023$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,136) = 4.50$, $p = 0.002$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

18. In the 2013 independent sample on the environmental protection case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,65) = 0.86$, $p = 0.013$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,116) = 11.37$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

19. There was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by a one-way ANOVA on the 2013 sample on the AIDS issue for independents ($F(5,84) = 4.98$, $p = .000$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(5,164) = 12.24$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

20. The one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups in the 2013 independent subgroup on the same-sex marriage issue ($F(7,110) = 2.83$, $p = 0.009$). The same was true with the

2016 sample ($F(7,220) = 17.88$, $p = 0.000$). Games-Howell tests for both samples reinforced the rankings described here.

21. The one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups among independents on the genetic testing issue in the 2013 sample ($F(4,66) = 3.92$, $p = 0.007$) categories. In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,114) = 3.42$, $p = 0.011$). A Games-Howell test reveals that Jolie's means are statistically significantly higher than Rubio's in 2013 ($p = 0.012$) and Trump's in 2016 ($p = 0.000$), but not the others.

22. In the 2013 sample on the marijuana legalization case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,69) = 8.18$, $p = 0.000$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,132) = 11.47$, $p = 0.000$). Among independents, Nelson's means are particularly strong and distinct in 2013 ($\bar{x} = 3.80$, SD = 1.01) and 2016 ($\bar{x} = 4.15$, SD = 0.93). A Games-Howell test reveals that Nelson's means are statistically significantly higher than all of the other political actors in 2016 and excepting Hillary Clinton in 2013 ($p = 0.05$).

23. There was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by a one-way ANOVA for the 2013 sample on the income inequality issue for Democrats ($F(4,63) = 12.99$, $p = .000$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically signifi-cant difference between groups ($F(4,93) = 16.17$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

24. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 ($F(5,86) = 12.62$, $p = 0.000$) and the 2016 ($F(5,112) = 5.96$, $p = 0.000$) gun control sample for Democrats. Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

25. In the 2013 Democrat sample on the genocide case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,68) = 13.44$, $p = 0.000$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(4,98) = 14.38$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

26. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups among Democrats on the environment issue in the 2013

sample ($F(4,62) = 6.98$, $p = 0.000$). The same was true for the 2016 sample ($F(4,106) = 17.97$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell test reinforce these findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

27. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 AIDS issue ($F(5,78) = 7.87$, $p = .000$) and the 2016 sample ($F(5,132) = 14.76$, $p = 0.000$) among Democrats. On the Games-Howell test for the 2013 results, Elton John's means are statistically significantly greater than Boehner's ($p = .021$), and DeGeneres's means are statistically significantly greater than Rubio's ($p = 0.010$), suggesting that even if Democratic politicians rank higher in credibility among Democratic respondents, celebrities rank higher than Republican politicians among those respondents. The 2016 Games-Howell results also bear out the results reported here.

28. The one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups in the 2013 Democrat subgroup on the same-sex marriage issue ($F(7,112) = 12.80$, $p = 0.000$). The same was true with the 2016 sample ($F(7,154) = 18.29$, $p = 0.000$). Games-Howell tests for both samples reinforced the rankings described here.

29. The one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups among Democrats on the genetic testing issue in the 2013 sample ($F(4,62) = 5.63$, $p = 0.001$) and the 2016 sample ($F(4,101) = 8.05$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

30. In the 2013 sample on the marijuana legalization case, among the Democratic subgroup, Nelson's means are statistically significantly lower than Clinton's and Obama's and indistinguishable from Boehner's or Rubio's. The one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups in 2013 ($F(4,66) = 7.45$, $p = 0.000$) and 2016 ($F(4,117) = 15.22$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell test reinforce these findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

31. In the 2013 sample on the Syrian case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(5,84) = 8.44$, $p = 0.000$). In the 2016 sample, there is also a statistically significant difference ($F(5,120) = 9.66$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

32. There was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA for the 2013 sample on the income

inequality issue for Republicans ($F(4,67) = 5.74$, $p = .009$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA also showed a statistically signifi-cant difference ($F(4,121) = 4.10$, $p = 0.005$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

33. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 ($F(5,88) = 6.85$, $p = 0.002$) and the 2016 ($F(5,148) = 5.06$, $p = 0.000$) gun control sample for Republicans. Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

34. A one-way ANOVA did not determine that there was a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 genocide issue sample for Republicans ($F(4,71) = 1.15$, $p = 0.339$). In the 2016 sample, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference ($F(4,118) = 3.51$, $p = 0.010$). A Games-Howell test was conducted on the 2016 sample, which revealed that Obama's credibility mean was higher than Clinton's ($p \leq 0.05$).

35. A one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups on the 2013 AIDS issue ($F(5,88) = 4.07$, $p = .002$) and the 2016 sample ($F(5,143) = 6.20$, $p = 0.000$) among Republicans. Results of the Games-Howell test reinforce these findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

36. The one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups in the 2013 Republican subgroup on the same-sex marriage issue ($F(7,110) = 2.83$, $p = 0.000$). The same was true with the 2016 sample ($F(7,200) = 8.04$, $p = 0.000$). Games-Howell tests for both samples reinforced the rankings described here.

37. The one-way ANOVA determined a statistically significant difference between groups among Democrats on the genetic testing issue in the 2013 sample ($F(4,71) = 3.30$, $p = 0.015$) and the 2016 sample ($F(4,114) = 3.42$, $p = 0.011$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings as reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

38. In the 2013 sample on the marijuana legalization case, the Republican subgroup's ANOVA did not demonstrate statistical significance between the groups ($F(4,70) = 1.17$, $p = 0.333$), suggesting that the actors' means are not distinct enough to distinguish a clear ranking. However, the one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups in 2016 ($F(4,128) = 13.76$, $p = 0.000$). Results of the Games-Howell test reinforced these findings ($p \leq 0.05$).

39. Among Republican respondents, on the 2013 sample on the Syrian case, a one-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference between groups ($F(5,87) = 4.03$, $p = 0.002$). In the 2016 sample, there is also a statistically significant difference ($F(5,137) = 4.30$, $p = 0.001$). Results of the Games-Howell also reinforced the 2013 and 2016 findings reported here ($p \leq 0.05$).

40. The following are OLS coefficients for correlations between gender and a celebrity's credibility as the dependent variable: George Clooney (β = 0.39). All findings were significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

41. The following are OLS coefficients for correlations between age and a celebrity's credibility as the dependent variable: Marco Rubio (β = –0.24); Clint Eastwood (β = –0.19); Tim Tebow (β = –0.03); Hillary Clinton (β = 0.02). All findings were significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

42. The following are OLS coefficients for correlations between education level and a celebrity's credibility as the dependent variable: Clint Eastwood (β = –0.32); Willie Nelson (β = –0.35). All findings were significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

43. The following are OLS coefficients for correlations between the independent/other ID and a celebrity's credibility as the dependent variable: Hillary Clinton (β = 0.35); Bruce Springsteen (β = 0.48); George Clooney (β = 0.40); Donald Trump (β = –0.86). All findings were significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

44. The following are OLS coefficients for correlations between Democrat Party ID and a celebrity's credibility as the dependent variable: Barack Obama (β = 1.06); Hillary Clinton (β = 1.02); Bruce Springsteen (β = 0.49); Willie Nelson (β = –0.57); Clint Eastwood (β = –0.64); Donald Trump (β = –1.27). All findings were significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

45. The following are OLS coefficients for correlations between Republican Party ID and a celebrity's credibility as the dependent variable: Donald Trump (β = 0.86); Marco Rubio (β = 0.63); John Boehner (β = 0.73); Tim Tebow (β = 0.64); Hillary Clinton (β = –0.67); Bruce Springsteen (β = –0.48); George Clooney (β = 0.37). All findings were significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

46. See appendix D for a detailed methodology.

47. An OLS regression model was employed. Results: Intercept (β = 2.48; S.E. = .04; t = 57.60); Institutionalization (β = 0.01; S.E. = 00; t =

2.71); Personal experience/expertise (β = 0.94; S.E. .07; t = 12.63). All results were significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

CHAPTER 5. THE POWER OF PERSUASION: CELEBRITIES FRAME POLITICAL ISSUES

1. Kingdon (2011) explains how policy entrepreneurs attempt to set public agendas by intervening in the problem, policy, and political streams, as summarized in chapter 2.

2. See appendices D and F for further details on the survey sample and methodology.

3. This bar is set very high for celebrity persuasion in this study. The Elaboration Likelihood Model argues that there are two routes to persuasion: central and peripheral. The central route assumes that the receiver is engaged and actively weighing the cues provided by the persuader, who is providing reasons to support an argument. Source characteristics may be ignored. Persuasion is more difficult because people are actively engaging with the information that may challenge core beliefs. The peripheral route, on the other hand, is marked by low involvement where an individual will weigh more source characteristics such as expertise, credibility, and attractiveness as crucial cues (Petty, Cacioppo, and Schumann 1983). It is an easier but less enduring route of persuasion, likened to using attractive models to sell beer in television commercials. While expertise and credibility of celebrities are not well established, attractiveness is often attributed to celebrities. The easy case for celebrity persuasion would be for this methodology to put up a picture of the celebrity with an endorsement and very few cues providing reasons or evidence to support an argument. While a celebrity photo was included on the feeling thermometer question, separate from the endorsement frame page, the information and frames provided many cues that likely put respondents into a central persuasion route. In this way, celebrities hypothetically could not rely upon good looks alone. This is a better analogy for celebrities' involvement in the political environment, since these otherwise attractive and charismatic figures suddenly are advocating positions that may require thought in order to change minds. Therefore, if

celebrities are able to persuade in even this very restrictive framework, the case is strong.

4. In order to illustrate the differences in outcomes between groups, tables were constructed illustrating the means differences. Ordered logistical regression models were employed to discover whether the means in the experimental groups differed significantly from the super control and control groups. These can be found in appendix G.

5. In this way, the design approaches a "least likely" methodological strategy, similar to case selection in chapter 3 (Eckstein 1998; Gerring 2007).

6. Clooney does not have set positions on Syria, although he is perceived as being liberal, so many would presume that he would oppose intervention. Running a pro-intervention frame for Clooney might be surprising, but when phrased in liberal language, it may seem credible. Some, such as DeGeneres on same-sex marriage, Bono on debt relief, and John on AIDS funding, were not "flipped," since their true positions are already very well known, and I was concerned that respondents would not believe the quotes or take the study seriously.

7. Clooney's pro-intervention endorsement is statistically significant and distinct from the control ($\beta = 1.073$, $p \leq .01$). Because the super control variable is not significant, it is clear that the frame alone is not persuasive. It is the argument in favor of intervention plus Clooney's endorsement that makes the difference. Jolie's ($\beta = -1.206$, $p \leq .001$) and Clooney's ($\beta = -0.746$, $p \leq .01$) anti-intervention endorsements are also statistically significant. Even the feelings respondents have about a celebrity are not correlated to changes in the mean outcomes. Thus someone may like or dislike Clooney and Jolie. Those feelings do not detract from their ability to persuade. Younger people are also slightly more likely to oppose intervention, according to table 5.2.

8. Clooney's ($\bar{x} = 3.06$, $\beta = 0.559$, n.s.) and Jolie's ($\bar{x} = 2.94$, $\beta = 0.264$, n.s.) means on the pro-Syrian intervention frame are higher than the control ($\bar{x} = 2.81$). Republican Party affiliation increased a respondent's likelihood to support a pro-intervention public official ($\beta = 0.61$, $p \leq .10$). Both Clooney's ($\bar{x} = 2.66$, $\beta = -0.638$, $p \leq .10$) and Jolie's ($\bar{x} = 2.58$, $\beta = -0.728$, $p \leq .10$) means are lower than the control group when advocating against intervention. This suggests that Clooney and Jolie were more likely than the

control group to persuade respondents not to support a public official advocating intervention.

9. See tables G.1 and G.2 in appendix G for complete results.

10. Respondents were also asked about whether they would give money or vote for candidates who supported same-sex marriage. Some results were positive and significant. These results are compiled in the aggregate analysis later in the chapter.

11. Specifically, only Ellen DeGeneres ($\bar{x}$= 4.00) produced means that were greater than the control ($\bar{x}$= 3.71). Because she was the only one who moved attitudes in the expected direction, it also implies that DeGeneres, not the frame alone, was the key factor in persuasion. DeGeneres's advocacy is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.953$, $p \leq .05$).

12. When exposed to the anti-same-sex marriage frame, Lady Gaga ($\bar{x}$= 2.80) and Tim Tebow ($\bar{x}$= 3.05) produced lower means than the control group mean, implying that Gaga and Tebow were capable of persuading respondents to oppose same-sex marriage. Tebow's ability to persuade is affirmed in table G.3 from appendix G ($\beta = -0.932$, $p \leq .05$). At $p = .157$, Gaga is not statistically significant, although the results still imply that her means result is 84 percent likely.

13. $p \leq .01$.

14. $p \leq .001$.

15. "Feeling about the celebrity" was not included in the aggregate analysis because it was computed in every ordered logit estimate, and it was positive and significant in only a few cases. It was significant in some of the same-sex marriage tables. Ironically, in most cases where it was significant, it was usually in cases where the celebrity was not persuasive. One of the handwritten responses to a survey illustrates the point. The respondent ranked Bono highly on the feeling thermometer and even wrote, "Great Guy! :)" When, on the following page, the respondent was asked to respond to Bono's endorsement, he indicated that he did not agree, writing, "Bono does a lot, is talented—but that doesn't make him right." Respondents liked Bono, but they did not follow him on debt relief.

16. At $p \leq .10$.

17. More details on this methodology can be found in appendix F.

18. The perceived importance of the issue is positively related to persuasion ($\beta = 1.51$, $p \leq .001$).

19. Highly polarized issues are negatively correlated with celebrity success, suggesting that celebrities are persuasive on topics that do not serve as wedge issues for either major political party ($\beta = -2.59$, $p \leq .01$).

20. Authenticity is positively related to persuasion ($\beta = 0.05$, $p \leq .05$).

21. A celebrity's expected beliefs on an issue has no bearing on their ability to persuade ($\beta = -2.45$, n.s.).

22. Full results of this analysis can be found in table G.4 of appendix G.

23. Credibility was not included as an aggregate variable in table 5.7, in part to avoid multicollinearity. It was also independently discussed in detail in chapter 4. Moreover, the theory in chapter 2 advanced the hypothesis that authenticity might drive the persuasiveness and thus the informational and charismatic power of celebrities. So incorporating the authenticity variable here instead of the credibility variable seemed to be a sound decision based on both theory and methodology.

CHAPTER 6. THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN': CELEBRITY POWER REVISITED

1. See Dorinson and Pencak 2004; Duberman 1996, 537, 563–64; Edy 2006; Freedom-ways 1998; Kusch 2004; Reasoner and Wallace 1967; Robeson 1988.

2. Nixon has never been directly linked to the attempt to "neutralize" Lennon, but his chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, was intimately involved in the operation.

3. In 1973 Norman Pilcher, the officer in charge of Lennon's arrest, was convicted of "conspiracy to pervert the course of justice" and was widely believed to have planted drugs at the homes of those he arrested (Travis 2005).

4. While this case was not part of the time series analysis from chapter 3, the *New York Times* covered many of Lennon's activities, particularly the John Sinclair concert and the subsequent events ("Freed Poet Hails Michigan Ruling; Sees Victory in Reversal of Marijuana Conviction" 1972; Salpukas 1971).

5. According to Jerry Schilling, one of Presley's closest friends and one of the men who had arranged the meeting, some of the content of his letter, which criticized the counterculture and the Beatles, may have been

overstated. Presley could recite Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech from memory. He met the Beatles, expressed respect for their music, and covered Beatles songs on his albums and in his live performances. Schilling argued that the real reason for the meeting was his desire to get "a special badge" to add to his collection. "The official badges that he had gave him the right to carry concealed weapons domestically," Schilling said. "But Elvis had a couple of very serious death threats at the time, and he wanted a federal badge so that he could carry concealed weapons abroad." Presley "knew what to say and he said the right things to get what he needed. But it's not like he was being phony either. He had some conservative tendencies, but he also had strong liberal tendencies" (Schilling and Crisafulli 2006).

6. Turner, Bonner, and Marshall (2000) focus on celebrity in Australia, and many biographies focus on celebrities who have leveraged their position to gain political influence, such as Nigeria's Fela Kuti (Schoonmaker 2003a, 2003a; Veal 2000).

7. Table 6.2 does not represent the universe of interventions. It does not include Will Rogers, for example. Rogers was an anecdotal illustration of an early celebrity, but his interventions were not quantified. Table 6.2 also does not take into account the long-term commitments that some celebrities have made to institutional causes for many years. It operates on a loose definition of what a celebrity intervention entails, because it includes some interventions that may be considered more "charitable" than "political."

8. Paul Robeson, appearing in many interventions from the 1930s through the 1950s, was categorized as a musician because most of his intervention events involved him singing in concert rather than acting or referencing his earlier days in sports. As someone who was an athlete, actor, and musician, he could have been counted three times for each intervention. This could be a challenge for operationalizing variables, although there are very few celebrities in history who were extremely successful in all three of these categories. If celebrities were as successful at gaining political attention in the 1930s as they are today, perhaps Robeson's exceptional status across celebrity professions played an important role in launching the idea of a celebrity as political activist. Perhaps few others who had such broad appeal could have been able to survive as long as he did.

9. This was the purpose of Mattern's (1998) work in which he focused on how normative communities were built around music and how it affected

their political involvement.

APPENDIX B. METHODOLOGY ON CHAPTER 3 CONTENT ANALYSIS

1. While choosing international issues does not precisely follow a crucial case approach where a single least likely case provides a reason to accept or reject a premise, it does follow this logic by choosing a series of cases where any political actor may have more difficulty raising the profile of the issue, thus increasing the rhetorical power of the argument.

2. Details on the political involvement of these celebrities in the causes selected for this study can be found in appendix A.

3. The purpose of this data was to consider a connection between deliberate interventions and numbers of news stories on an issue on a given day. In other words, George Clooney being mentioned in a story was not sufficient to be counted as an intervention. He had to be involved in some sort of event intended to advance his cause.

4. Upon closer examination of the news cycles, stories often had longer staying power than one day. However, using a one-day lag made it easier to isolate the effects of a single story. Since celebrities and other political actors often engaged in a series of political events in short sequences for days in a row, a two-day lag made it difficult to discern which intervention caused a spike in coverage on an issue. Thus, for methodological reasons, the narrower operationalization of these variables was chosen. The advantage of this approach was greater precision in isolating independent variables. The disadvantage was that the results probably underestimate the potential impact of an intervention.

5. Going into the reasons for utilizing this kind of lag in the OLS model, or whether to use a lag at all, is beyond the scope of this book. The two articles cited here acknowledge the debate surrounding the utilization of lags in time series analysis and indicate that there is much support in the academic community and scientific validity behind this approach.

6. The total number of cases was treated as 123: a measure of each political actor’s opportunity to “win” or “lose.” The spreadsheet was set up and the regression models calculated so that all political actors’ wins and losses could be tallied and so that conditions for all wins and losses could

be correlated with independent variables. Because there were 88 events, some of the events were counted multiple times, depending on the number of participants involved. So an event involving Bush and Bono would have been calculated as two intervention opportunities to allow for the fact that both may have scored a "loss," allowing a clean count for each political actor irrespective of his/her partner at a given event. Since the dependent variable is a measure of wins and losses per individual's intervention opportunity and not a measure of winning or losing an entire event, this seemed an appropriate way to compute results.

7. Situations where specific legislators intervened were coded and counted by their name. Numbers of politicians were capped at six, equal to the highest number of celebrities at a given event. The reason is that some institutions (such as the U.S. Congress) drove some news events, and it is not easy to quantify a number in such circumstances. If Congress intervenes, it does not realistically equate to 538 politicians when so many unnamed people produce an "intervention" in the media.

APPENDIX E. METHODOLOGY ON CREDIBILITY STUDY

1. See Lammie (2007) on how respondents may react to celebrities differently based on party affiliation.

2. Originally these were set as separate variables, but they were highly correlated and combined in order to avoid autocorrelation.

3. Celebrities only received points for their founding or affiliation with organizations that were relevant to the issue areas covered in the time series and/or experimental design surveys. This was based on the assumption that a celebrity such as Bono might be credible when speaking about AIDS or debt relief but not necessarily on gun control.

APPENDIX F. METHODOLOGY ON SURVEYS AND MEANS TESTS

1. Phrasing of the questions, design of the scales, and overall survey design were modeled after a number of studies from reputable social science sources (American National Election Studies n.d.; Brubaker 2011; General Social Survey n.d.; Kuklinski and Hurley 1994; Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism 2005; Vagias 2006).

2. An Ellen DeGeneres experimental group was added late in the survey process to the pro-same-sex marriage side. This required a minor adjustment in the language of her frame. Since she is openly gay, it made no sense for her to say something like, “It doesn’t hurt me or anybody else if gay people get married,” implying a separation between her and other homosexuals. So her frame was phrased like this: “God loves everyone. I think it’s time to stop looking at homosexuals as freaks. And no law forces individual churches to marry gay people, so really it still would be up to each congregation whether or not they want to do it. We need to legalize same-sex marriage to end discrimination and give gay couples the same rights as everybody else. I encourage others to financially support organizations and candidates who will protect these rights.” Other than the exclusion of that line, it is identical to the other celebrities’ frames.

3. Data was taken from August 7–11, 2013. If the issue was less than 1 percent, a 0.5 was added to the total. While not all issues registered specifically on the list, many pertained to the issues in the surveys. The question was open-ended, so there were dozens of responses, and many of the issues listed had very low values in terms of percentage of people who believed an issue was important.

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